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ABSTRACT

This report describes a project that adopted a curriculum development approach to meet the education and training needs of the unemployed and other disadvantaged groups in Birmingham, England. Chapter 1 gives the project's purpose. Chapter 2 sets the project in its context--an outer city area. Chapter 3 describes the processes of analyzing needs and carrying out surveys and searches. Evidence is presented of the extent to which unemployed and other disadvantaged groups were already taking up learning opportunities in adult education. The chapter recounts what was learned from talking to long-term unemployed adults about their first educational experience, employment, unemployment, use of time, and aspirations. Chapter 4 describes the lessons learned from the processes of developing the curriculum through pilot projects. An account of starting up a cross-service (further education-adult education-voluntary sector) staff training and development group is included. Chapter 5 recommends types of provision of education and training. Chapter 6 offers recommendations to policymakers. Five appendixes include the Project Information Bulletin, a case study of a marketing and pilot exercise, a descriptive chart of the pilot schemes or projects, a checklist for practitioners developing an adult curriculum, and a bibliography and reference section. (YLB)

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- REPLAN aims to help those who provide education by identifying and publicising the most effective ways and means of meeting the educational needs of the unemployed, and by encouraging closer collaboration between the various providing agencies.
- The programme is funded by the Department of Education and Science and the Welsh Office; certain elements of the programme are also supported financially by the Manpower Services Commission. On behalf of REPLAN, the FEU and the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) are managing complementary programmes of development and NIACE is employing and managing an advisory team of field officers led by a national co-ordinator.
- Staff development programmes are being organised by NIACE in collaboration with the Regional Advisory Councils for further education, with participants drawn from a wide range of institutions and agencies in the statutory and voluntary sectors.
- Education Support Grants are being allocated to many local education authorities to strengthen the planning and co-ordination of provision for unemployed adults in their areas.
- For further information on REPLAN, contact:
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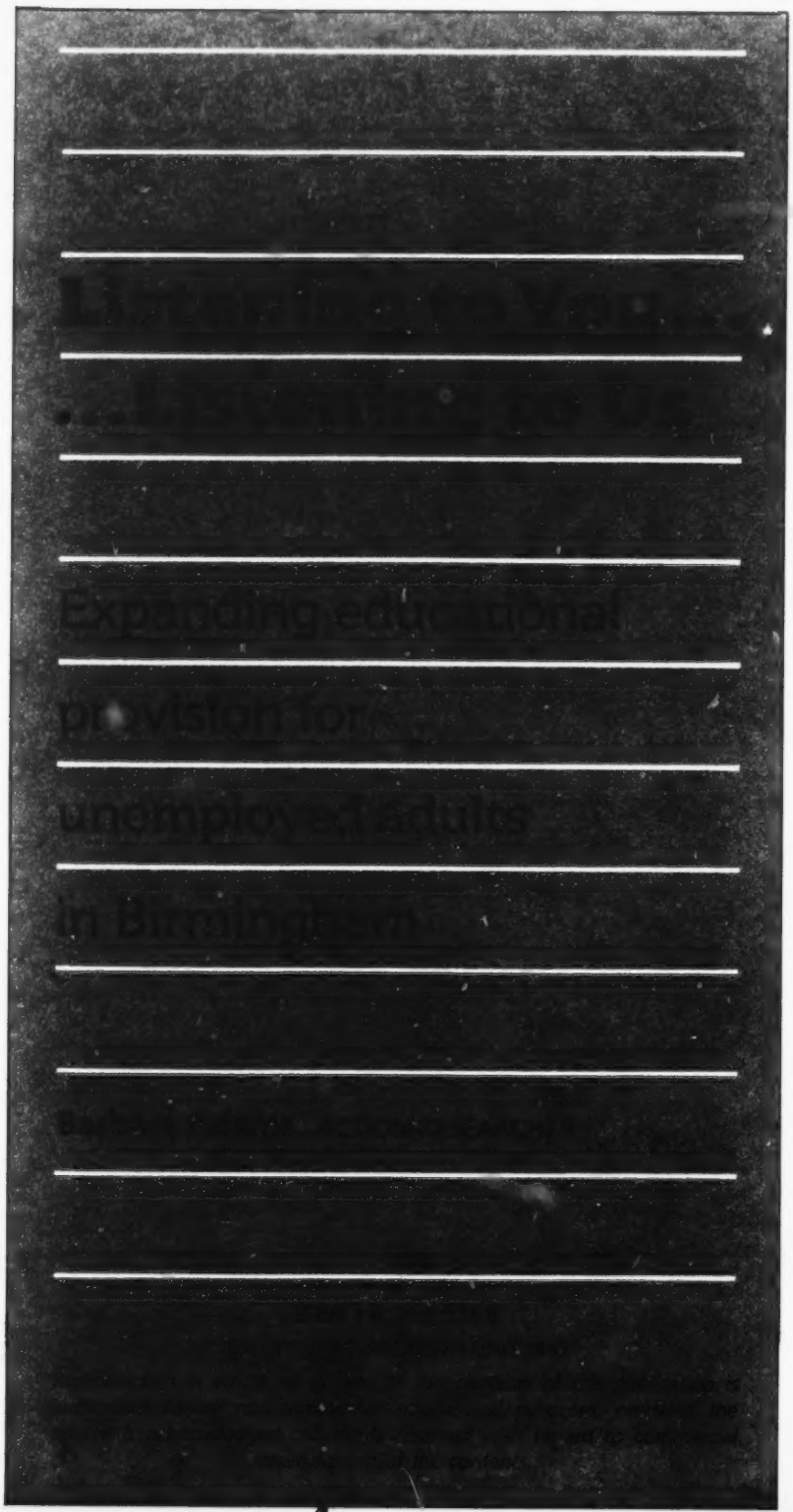

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Dear Sir/Madam,

LISTENING TO YOU... LISTENING TO US

Attached is an FEU REPLAN project report, commissioned from Kings Heath Adult Education Centre in Birmingham.*

This project adopted a classical curriculum development approach to the task of meeting the education/training needs of unemployed and other disadvantaged groups in the Kings Heath area. The literature was reviewed, people were interviewed in depth, the existing curricular provision was mapped, and new programmes were tested, developed and marketed.

The data that emerged adds to our growing awareness of the ways in which unemployed and disadvantaged adults perceive the education system. The messages indicate, not for the first time, that many adults do not instinctively turn to the education service to assist them when they are in need of support. This reflects, more often than not, unproductive earlier experiences in education.

Apart from some well-grounded curriculum development advice, the report emphasises the importance of involving the whole institution in planning for the unemployed, and provides messages for local authorities about the co-ordination of effort required between planners, advisers and managers of provision.

Another emphasis is reflected in the title. This refers to a priority in the project for a mutual listening process, with unemployed people themselves playing a vital part in the dialogue. This leads not only to the definition of new programmes but also to the creation of initiatives and structures better designed to face the challenge of changing social, economic and educational conditions.

Recommendations in Chapter 6 are addressed to all those with responsibilities for providing adult education services. The report is complementary to another FEU REPLAN report, Anxious to Work. Both can be recommended to an increasingly large group of providers, whether located in LEA administration, adult education centres, leisure services departments or further education colleges.

Yours faithfully

Jack Mansell

JACK MANSELL
Chief Officer

* Now part of the Birmingham Recreation and Community Services Department.

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Finally, we are indebted to Maggie Harris for the patient and skilled way in which she carried out the secretarial work involved.

Barbara Adams

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GUIDE TO THE REPORT

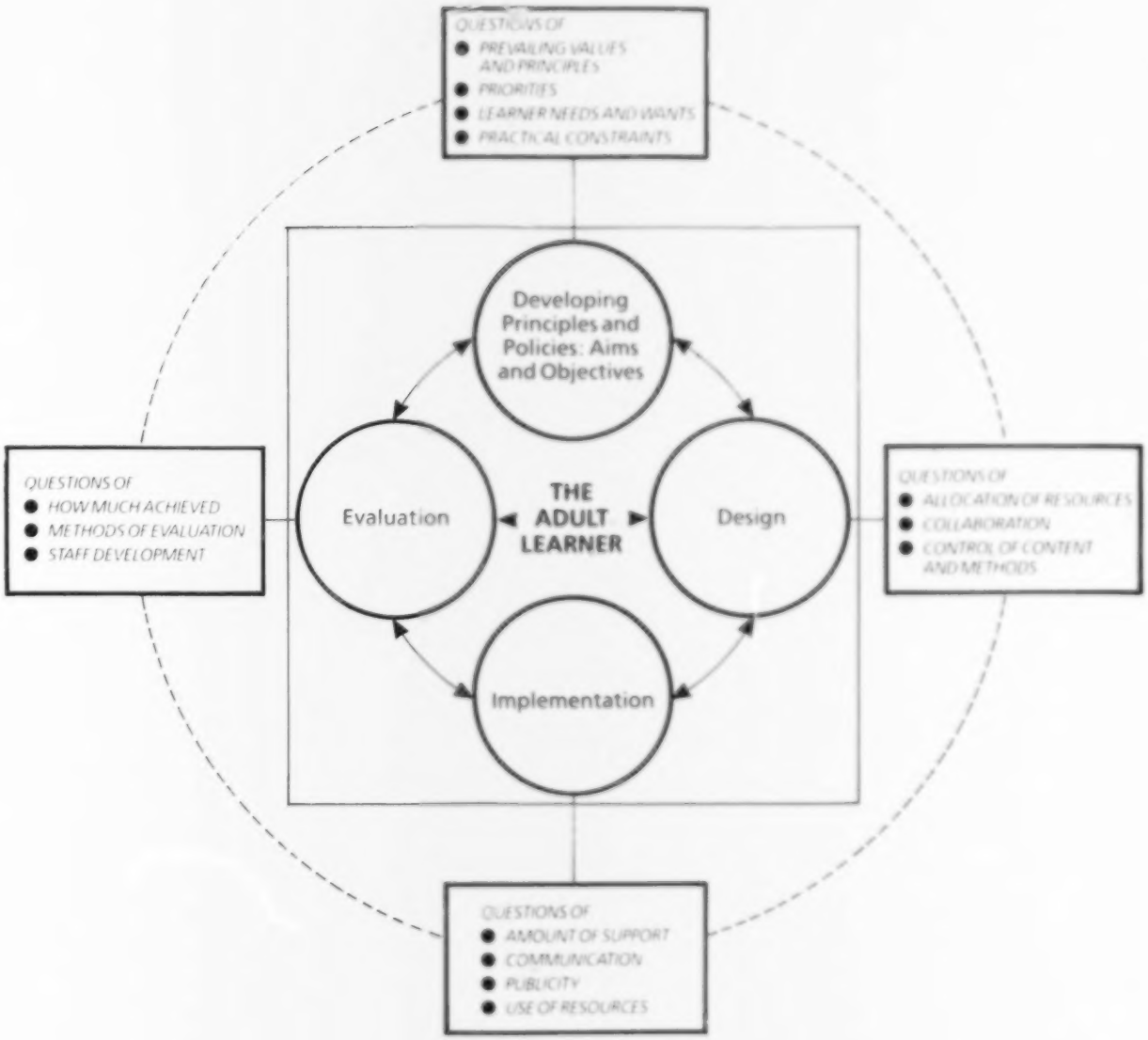
- **Chapter 1 and Appendix I (Project Information Bulletin)** *give the project's purpose fully. The term 'curriculum' is clarified and our view of what education can do for the adult unemployed is given.*
- **Chapter 2** *sets the project in its Kings Heath/Hall Green context – an outer city area referred to as 'Kings Heath Institute' at the start of the project and, subsequently, as 'Hall Green Area'.*
- **Chapter 3** *describes the processes of analysing needs and carrying out surveys and searches. In order to establish what was already being provided, 66 workers in the statutory and voluntary sectors were interviewed and details of this curriculum map are included at the end of the chapter.*

  Evidence is presented of the extent to which unemployed and other disadvantaged groups were already taking up learning opportunities in adult education in 1985.

  The chapter also gives an account of what we learned from talking at length to long-term unemployed adults about their first-chance educational experience, their employment, unemployment, use of time and aspirations for the future. There are clues here about how, and how not, to provide educational opportunities for them.
- **Chapter 4** *describes the lessons learned from the processes of developing the curriculum through pilot schemes. These are charted in Appendix III and were set up on the basis of information gathered and gaps identified in the needs analyses already referred to in Chapter 3.*

  An account of starting up a cross-service (further education – adult education – voluntary sector) staff training and development group is included here.
- *From all the research and experimentation, we came to conclusions about the sorts of provision and the ways of providing education and training which are likely to work. These are put forward as findings in* **Chapter 5** *and echoed in a curriculum development checklist for practitioners in Appendix IV.*
- *Finally, policy-makers are directed to* **Chapter 6**, *which offers recommendations which might guide their decision making.*
- **APPENDIX I** *contains the Project Information Bulletin.*
- **APPENDIX II** *is a case-study of a marketing and pilot exercise: Brandwood Open Week.*
- **APPENDIX III** *charts the pilot schemes, of which there were 27.*
- **APPENDIX IV** *gives a checklist for practitioners who are developing the curriculum for adults.*
- **APPENDIX V** *is a bibliography and reference section.*

Figure 1: A SYSTEMS MODEL



1 INTRODUCTION

WHAT THE PROJECT SET OUT TO DO

1. The project's three aims were set out in the Project Information Bulletin as follows:

(i) To develop the education and training curriculum to meet the needs of unemployed and other disadvantaged groups of adults in the Kings Heath area of Birmingham by:

(a) identifying the educational and training needs of unemployed and other disadvantaged groups in the area;

(b) analysing existing provision in the Institute in order to identify gaps and good practices;

(c) devising schemes, in liaison with other agencies, which develop new curricula, delivery systems, guidance and outreach strategies.

(ii) To link the curriculum provision and guidance services within the education service to broader provision by other institutions (e.g. MSC voluntary/community agencies etc.)

(iii) To monitor and evaluate the development process as a basis for further development (including staff development) within the Institute's area and in other parts of the city.

WHAT WE MEAN BY CURRICULUM

2. In this project, curriculum refers to all the processes involved in devising, presenting and evaluating educational provision. The systems model (Figure 1) taken from *Curriculum Development in the Education of Adults: A Manual for Practitioners* (FEU, 1984) provided a checklist for action.

THE UNEMPLOYED AND EDUCATION

3. The individual unemployed adult may seldom think about education. Indeed, there is evidence that for a great many there can be an inbuilt resistance to it. For them, more important questions are:

- ☐ How will I cope materially and can I increase my income?
- ☐ How can I mix with people now? What will they think of me?
- ☐ How can I use my time fruitfully?
- ☐ Will I ever hold up my head again?
- ☐ Will I dare try for another job, how would I feel if they turned me down?

WHAT EDUCATION CAN DO FOR THE ADULT UNEMPLOYED

4. In their report, Watts and Knasel suggest that the education and training curriculum for adults can be developed so as to address each of these questions positively to some degree. They analyse educational provision made by a range of organisations and identify five objectives being met:

(i) Employability – developing knowledge, skills and attitudes which will increase their chances of finding and keeping a job.

(ii) Coping – developing knowledge, skills and attitudes which will help them to cope with being unemployed.

(iii) Context – understanding the extent to which responsibility for being unemployed lies with society and exploring possible forms of social, political and community action related to unemployment.

(iv) Leisure – helping to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes which will make good use of increased 'leisure' time.

(v) Opportunity creation – developing knowledge, skills and attitudes which will enable them to create their own livelihood.

5. Throughout their report Watts and Knasel refer to the growth in self-confidence experienced by unemployed adults on the courses they visited. The problem for education in Kings Heath was how to bring about this breadth of provision and that was the focus of this project.

2 BACKGROUND

THE AREA

6. The Kings Heath area is in South Birmingham and has a population of approximately 100,000 people, housed in four large municipal estates and two more suburban areas. Because it is outside the designated Inner-City Partnership Programme area it does not attract any special funding and educational resources are less than in some other areas of the city.

7. The population is very diverse, from professional/managerial to plant operatives. Locally there is some modern clerical/administrative employment in major insurance companies and some light manufacturing, but little else beyond a small amount in local retailing.

8. Most people used to travel to work but the heavy decline in metal manufacturing, especially in the car components industry, has severely affected employment opportunities for the area. Unemployment figures in the area vary enormously from 14.6% on some estates to 24.8% in areas bordering Sparkhill.

EDUCATIONAL PROVISION FOR ADULTS

9. During the period of the project, arrangements for adult education were restricted but, initially, the Kings Heath Institute provided an integrated adult education youth and community service utilising a range of facilities. Networks of contacts provided working links with a variety of statutory and voluntary agencies. There were four major adult education evening centres as well as programmes of daytime activities which included some adult basic education and English as a second language. Links with the local technical college (Hall Green) were limited. A small pilot survey of adult educational needs was undertaken in a Jobcentre, in conjunction with the Birmingham Adult Learners Enquiry Centre (ALEC) and the Workers' Educational Association (WEA), in 1983.

10. The Institute, one of twelve in the city, served a population of approximately 100,000 people. The Institutes were all autonomous but Area Management Boards were established and sought to ensure co-ordination with other City Departments. Full-time staffing at Kings Heath varied between three and five, relatively low compared with other institutes in the City.

11. The adult education programme in 1984 offered a wide range of subjects to approximately 4,000 part-time students. The majority of these were women, studying mainly non-vocational subjects in the evening. Lack of daytime accommodation limited the range of provision but there were increases in the number of unemployed student enrolments. The Institute was notably successful in developing close ties with the voluntary sector and outreach educational activities were also developing Bids for external funding from various sources, including the Arts Council, Sports Council and Charitable Trusts, had been successful and there were a number of new developments.

12. Hall Green Technical College is sited on the extreme north-east edge of the area and has been severely affected by the recent decline in the engineering industry. There are new developments at the College such as YTS, and some moves into provision for unemployed adults who can infill on existing courses. Since the reorganisation, the College has taken over the management of an outreach centre, the Sparkhill Job Preparation Unit, which provides formal and informal opportunities for unemployed young adults.

13. With falling rolls, two secondary schools have closed, leaving seven, one of which has a sixth form. In addition there is a selective grant-aided school within the catchment area. Since 1980, fewer 16-year-olds have been obtaining employment but, with more gaining places on training schemes or in further education, the number remaining unemployed has fallen.

14. There are several training schemes available. A Youth Training Scheme opened in 1981 to serve one estate and another is managed by Hall Green Technical College. There is a Community Programme, Kings Heath Unemployed Project in Yardley Wood, whose work has been mainly concerned with support to 'drop-ins' located in the area's Youth and Community Centres and sporting activities for young unemployed men.

THE PROJECT

15. In negotiating the project, it was agreed that the targeted group would be the adult unemployed and that the curriculum would encompass both education and training. The Kings Heath/Hall Green area was chosen because it is not inner city but does include some ethnic minorities among its residents and is comparatively underdeveloped. It has received relatively less funding from mainstream sources in the past than other areas of the city. The team of full-time staff was relatively small and there was a lack of daytime facilities generally, all of which had restricted the amount of development. Relationships between the Institute and Hall Green Technical College were mostly informal, for example co-membership on working parties.

16. The aim of the project was 'to research and develop adult education and training curricula'. The proposals placed an emphasis on adult foundation training and helping people to retain their employability. To this end 'access to opportunities' would be made easier by appropriate timing, flexible delivery and provision of access measures such as crèches. 'Disadvantaged' was defined to include not only unemployed adults but ethnic minorities, those with physical or mental disabilities, single parents, women who wish to return to work and those adults whose income qualifies them for DHSS support. The development of links between the Institute and Hall Green Technical College was an important feature of the submission.

17. Each aspect of the research described in the Project Information Bulletin was undertaken: reviewing opportunities, setting up experimental projects, monitoring and reporting to the steering committee. However, during this period, there was a major reorganisation of adult education provision in Birmingham in which the Institute ceased to exist and this resulted in some changes in the project. During the change, staff for the new service were redeployed from posts within the old. The changeover process, from February to July, inevitably brought about a difficult period while the new system was settling in. As was to be expected, a majority of staff were quite new to their roles, particularly the new Area Managers, whose responsibilities were much wider than those of the former principals.

18. At Kings Heath Institute the Principal and Vice-Principal were amongst the first to take up posts elsewhere and, pending the arrival of new senior management, there was a loss of momentum. The impact on FACET (Further, Adult and Continuing Education and Training) (as the project came to be known) was substantial because colleagues enlisted as co-workers or engaged in negotiation either changed posts or left, new personnel arrived, there were gaps when workers were not replaced, and it was difficult to plan ahead because, for a time, budgets within the 'new' service were unknown. At the same time there were substantial management changes in the Technical College.

19. Within the total area of Kings Heath and Hall Green there are sub-areas which display social characteristics more reminiscent of areas located within the inner city. This has been well researched and documented in a report written for City of Birmingham Social Services Department in 1983 by Probert and Woron. In common with other such areas these neighbourhoods were not accorded the status of priority areas when major resources were allocated. The poor availability and accuracy of data relating to these areas arises from two factors: analyses of needs in outer areas are rare and such data, when available, is aggregated to *ward* level and above, thus obscuring the realities of sub-areas with dire needs.

3 THE PROCESSES INVOLVED

OUTLINE OF METHODOLOGY

20. A number of methods were used to tackle aim (i)(a) (see paragraph 1) of identifying needs. The overall strategy involved listening to, talking with and observing unemployed adults and those who worked with them in the field of education and training. We looked at what the unemployed adults were already involved in and how they viewed education and training as a route out of, or through, unemployment. For aim (i)(b), we looked into what the providers in the statutory and voluntary sectors already achieved or attempted via both established and experimental development. In pursuit of (i)(c), a number of pilot projects were undertaken to test out the kinds of learning and delivery styles needed, especially where gaps existed in the curriculum or progression was difficult or simply not recognised. Finally, in respect of aim (ii), we explored ways of bringing together the providers right across the spectrum in an attempt to learn, exchange information and good practice and develop the curriculum and themselves together. Throughout there was an emphasis on reviewing, experimenting and monitoring.

21. Although a little information was available from ready-made sources, the majority of it had to be obtained by collecting and collating from scratch. This led to a great deal of teamwork and the need to involve others. Paid, voluntary and unemployed helpers were all used in the processes of the project. When carrying out a street poll, unemployed adults took part in devising the questionnaire and other processes; an example of the collaboration and negotiation which were part and parcel of every stage.

22. In all there were 24 in-depth interviews (for analysis see paragraphs 92-117), 185 house visits, a survey of 100 unemployed adults, a telephone survey of providers and lengthy interviews with them.

23. Questionnaires were developed and used and observation conducted in various settings. A review was undertaken of published programmes, enrolment information and existing documentation from the Social Services and other local and national agencies. Twenty-seven pilot schemes were tried (Appendix III and Chapter 4). The experimental exercises began in July 1985 and continued to the end of the project. Each of those involved some negotiation and the co-operation of a number of agencies including adult education, the College, hospital services, voluntary agencies, special schemes, advisory agencies and community groups. Generating and maintaining levels of interest and commitment to the aims of the project on the part of such agencies accounted for much of the effort put in by the Action Researcher. Another important focus was the development and planning of the approach to the research.

ISSUES CONCERNING USE OF ACTION RESEARCH IN EDUCATION

24. The processes of curriculum development cannot be handled like laboratory experiments, but it is important to be as vigorous and meticulous as possible in the interests of credibility and validity. Ruddock identified some of the problems for researchers and has shown how the methods used by practitioners to evaluate the adult curriculum can be unsatisfactory. He speaks of 'the difficulty of assessing the effects of what they do and how they do it, especially the overall and long term effects'. Ruddock also stresses that there are important questions of learning, perhaps the most important, that can never be resolved by any methods of enquiry. He also recognises the essential nature of educational research: '... no social enquiry can escape an involvement in philosophical and political issues at every turn. It is of course true that many investigators, including evaluators in education, have themselves still not understood this.'

25. With these three points in mind, we tried, in adopting an action research approach, to maintain objectivity by using several different forms of inquiry and letting considerable numbers of unemployed adults speak for themselves. In that way a range of philosophical and political points were presented.

26. Great weight was attached to the spoken and written views and feedback from both the unemployed and those who work with them. Action research has this advantage of direct contact as compared with other desk-based types of research. According to Ruddock:

'Action research can certainly inform the thinking of all concerned with intervention programmes, and usually does so to far greater effect than more formal research methods.'

27. The 24 in-depth interviews are a case in point. They act as a means of letting target groups speak unrestrainedly (as far as is ever possible) of their experience of life, education and unemployment and they provide good primary data. This dimension cannot often be included in education research because it is immensely time-consuming and requires a great deal of self-disclosure from the clients/students.

Obtaining data

28. Early in the life of the project the availability of background data was patchy. Some valuable secondary sources concerning unemployment patterns were found and used, mainly from the Department of Employment figures provided by West Midlands County Council. Other readily available data was obtained through class registers and enrolment records and the careers section of the LEA. One instance exists of data which was at the same time both secondary and primary: a survey of 435 unemployed adults carried out by volunteers drawn from several churches in Kings Heath, the data from which was handed over to the Action Researcher for analysis and interpretation.

29. Complete profiles of large groups in the community are by their very nature difficult to obtain: the range of information required, the relative isolation of the groups concerned, the time available and sensitivity of some of the information requested all render the task difficult. Furthermore, profiles of provision are complex because it is diverse and the number of providers and locations considerable. It would have been too easy to include too much data on the one hand, or appear sketchy on the other.

30. Information specific to the geographical area concerning the educational and training needs of, and provision for, unemployed adults was not readily available and had to be obtained by:

Surveys:	brief approaches (10 – 20 minutes) in person or by telephone to establish basic facts about provision. Approaches made to co-ordinators, managers, workers.
Interviews:	a longer more detailed process of one or two hours used to obtain a full account of (a) provision, its aims, presentation, target group funding, duration etc., and (b) the experience of unemployment for an individual.
Questionnaires:	used in the street poll, ethnic minorities outreach, feedback and evaluation procedures.
Observation:	when visiting centres, institutions, events, meetings etc.
Listening:	constantly, both for the purpose of records and informally.

31. While collecting information about provision and the educational and training needs of unemployed adults it became clear that in some instances a number of practical problems could arise.

Confidentiality

32. The nature of adult education provision means that it could happen that the sources of recorded interviews could be identified. Where workers/volunteers were willing to be frank about the provision, including any perceived shortcomings of their organisations or managements, in the course of indicating their views on possible ways forward in developing the curriculum, it was necessary to assure them of absolute confidentiality. The substance of their comments was, in some cases, generalised so as to make it unlikely that the speaker would be associated with what might be regarded by some as negative or unhelpful statements.

Boundaries

33. Two problems of boundaries affected the project.

(i) The existence of different boundaries for different official agencies e.g. Jobcentre clients at Kings Heath Jobcentre living outside the project area and residents within Hall Green using another Jobcentre outside the area. At the same time people's idea of their area is not the same as the Local Authority's – e.g. many Kings Heath residents will think first of going to Bournville College of Further Education or Matthew Boulton College, rather than Hall Green Technical College, largely because Hall Green Technical College is on the extreme boundary of the area. These factors can distort data.

(ii) The change in boundaries under the reorganisation of adult education left questions to be resolved about whether all the areas surveyed were or were not part of the new area. These factors can also distort data.

Recording media

34. The variety of means of record-keeping and the variations in frequency of producing information, the categories of information and groupings of people according to age, sex, study, disadvantage etc. are such that the range of data can be bewildering. Finding common ground on which to make comparison was not always easy.

35. The existence of an agreed system for collecting and co-ordinating information plus the use of modern technology for storing, analysing and updating would have been most helpful in establishing a picture of patterns of need set against appropriateness of provision.

Changes

36. In the present economic and political climate, it is inevitable that statutory and other organisations undergo change of one sort or another: efficiency drives, rationalisation, reordered priorities and so on. The effects of these changes on the project are considerable. Not only did organisational change have an impact, but other changes of direction and consequently of personnel meant disruptions and uncertainty at every level.

Inaccuracies

37. Although every effort has been made to avoid the possibilities of inaccuracy and misleading information, areas remain where *total* certainty of accuracy cannot be claimed (see paragraph 19).

LISTENING TO THE PROVIDERS AND MAPPING PROVISION

38. The curriculum mapping process brought to light a number of interesting factors, not least the difficulty in obtaining an overall picture of provision at any given time. The rate of change and development is such that an interval of a month or even a week can alter the picture. Additionally, since some of this provision represents new curricula or styles, there is more short-term experimental work, and this appears to create an even more rapid rate of change. Structuring the information becomes difficult because there are few common threads and the dearth of connections confuses client and provider alike. While one would not expect to see a single continuum on which progress may be made by the student, we seem to have the opposite extreme of isolated incidents of provision with little connecting matter.

39. A true picture would also have to reveal the extent of resources available for the work. This is very difficult to estimate because it often involves a *proportion* of a worker's time, hidden costs covered by sharing equipment and availability of clerical and reprographic resources.

40. There is great unevenness between, say, a college lecturer surrounded by support of all kinds and a community development worker who applies for funds, interviews staff, decides the priorities and is the keyholder for the premises used.

41. A further distortion arises from the multiplicity of aims and objectives. The funding agencies may not be the same as those funding the main institution or curriculum and individual professional providers of education and training may have other priorities but have taken up the funding out of simple expediency. Understanding the decision-making process and how priorities and policies are developed in respose to need is complex when different people have different aims.

42. The aim of interviewing was to map the provision for adult unemployed as it existed when the project began. It became clear while carrying out the survey of provision that the providers themselves, whether in college, institute, community or voluntary sector, were very conscious of the extent of need among the client group and the consequent responsibility this appeared to leave them with. They expressed, therefore, many needs for their own support – both personal and professional – advice, skills and clear direction. These messages were noted alongside the infomation collected in the pro-forma devised for the first purpose of logging provision.

43. Each provider was interviewed following the pro-forma questions. At the end they were invited to read the researcher's notes on the form as a correct record of the conversation. On one occasion the individual provider completed the form, following due explanation of it, as this was more convenient.

44. Points to note were:

- ☐ the evident high motivation of workers at the contact level;
- ☐ the uncertainties they were faced with (budgets, objectives, approval);
- ☐ the 'floodgate' effect of the interview;
- ☐ the low status and priority accorded to the work often perceived by workers;
- ☐ the vulnerability of this kind of enterprise to problems over:
  - resources
  - workers' contracts
  - lack of priority within the curriculum.

LISTENING TO THE UNEMPLOYED

45. Setting aside a large amount of casual, unrecorded feedback from unemployed adults, the project initiated dialogue in three ways: a street poll (100 people), in-depth interviews (24 people) and evaluation sessions following pilot courses. There were also 185 'door knocks' among the Asian community to gather details about educational need, and information was obtained from 435 questionnaires completed November – December 1984 (on leisure interests).

46. Study of these processes from planning through to evaluation inspired a number of interesting observations.

- ☐ Careful preparation of a poll questionnaire (or of an interview) which involves the interviewers at every stage is vital in achieving a committed and sensitive execution of the task.
- ☐ Questions asked in person gain a more positive respose than those asked by postal or other means. We experienced no refusal in the ESL 'door knock' outreach, nor in the in-depth interviews, and relatively few in the street poll.
- ☐ The involvement of colleagues and unemployed volunteers in carrying out these surveys was to prove a sound means of sustaining interest in the project. The experience was felt by them to have been most worthwhile.
- ☐ The willingness, not to say need, to disclose detailed impressions and recollections of one's life experience was a common response of in-depth interviewees. The opportunity to share such information and begin to rethink it was welcomed.
- ☐ Evaluation needs to be based on scrutiny of the evidence over quite a long period, so as to reduce subjectivity. The 24 interviews in particular required careful logging of each item of information, so as to avoid mere impressions which might have matched subjectively held myths or prejudices.

LITERATURE SEARCH

47. A wide literature search was undertaken concurrently with the initial survey and early phase of the project (see Appendix V). Briefly, reading included material relating to curriculum development, adult learning, research projects and the issues they reveal such as staff development and outreach. Sources such as the Careers Department and County Council statistics were consulted as were a number of individuals who had knowledge of the local, national or other regional scenes. These processes of reading, noting, visiting, listening and recording were valuable both in building a composite picture of the many elements involved in FACET and in bringing to light useful information and practice which could be capitalised on.

48. It was interesting to note the following:

- ☐ The great variety of project work engaged in, both written and unwritten.
- ☐ The difficulties researchers face when seeking ready reference to comparable research projects elsewhere. Rigorous effort is required to find other information and contact other workers, despite the fact that there are numerous other projects. Some strengthening of co-ordination – via REPLAN, for example – could help here.
- ☐ The people needing up-to-date information on good practice quickly were sometimes the least likely to have it. For example, it was often the Action Researcher, rather than trainers or managers, who fed leaflets giving news of developments in further education to further education lecturers engaged in similar work.
- ☐ A project can be the focus, generator and disseminator of current ideas and good practice and raise the levels of awareness and knowledge for a considerable number of workers. This happened both formally, in this case through seminars and other meetings, and informally, while carrying out surveys and developments.

NEEDS ANALYSIS

49. A detailed description of aspects of the needs analysis follows. The survey of provision is covered, curriculum development issues arising from the enrolment analysis are offered and there is an analysis of the in-depth interviews.

Survey of provision

Purpose and nature of the survey

50. The first research task of the project was to survey the education and training provision for unemployed adults in Kings Heath. To this end, a number of providers were interviewed between December 1984 and March 1985. Providers included tutors, centre heads, community workers, Community Programme participants, college lecturers and senior management, outreach workers, broadcasters, local authority administrative staff, volunteers and members of responsible bodies and voluntary organisations. In the case of some provision more than one provider may have been approached, for example, the tutor as well as the manager or person responsible for programming or finding funds for the course. By these means a composite picture of provision was obtained. The purpose of the survey was to establish the extent of provision, identify the good practice within it and pinpoint any gaps.

Overall picture of provision

51. From the information gleaned in this way, a picture emerged of considerable activity in the Institute's area. The most noticeable features of specialised provision were:

- ☐ that it was mostly of recent origin (within five years);
- ☐ that provision funded by external agencies was predominant;
- ☐ that most externally funded provision was relatively short-term, i.e. one year or less;
- ☐ that this type of provision did not (on the whole) link in with the mainstream curriculum for adults, that is, with consistently available full- and part-time courses in adult education, further education and the voluntary sector;
- ☐ that much energy was being put into devising and marketing new provision;
- ☐ that a number of providers were succeeding in adjusting their mainstream budgets and priorities in order to offer programmes more suitable and accessible to disadvantaged groups and using great enterprise to achieve these developments.

52. The provision, though varied, often innovative, and capable of meeting many needs, was uncoordinated and potentially baffling for the student seeking to make his/her way to a job. It soon became clear that one reason for the lack of coherence and the profusion of models of provision was a lack of opportunity for providers to share information and experience of good practice and of failure. Among the factors responsible for the lack of exchange were:

- ☐ a multiplicity of employing agencies with varying objectives;
- ☐ criteria for courses and projects imposed from outside and occasionally giving rise to uncertainty regarding the limits of an individual's brief;
- ☐ pressure to devise, produce and monitor a programme;
- ☐ pressure to find further work (as in the Community Programme) or funding (as in MSC, Sports Council projects etc.);
- ☐ insufficient priority given to promoting collaboration and co-operation between agencies.

53. The following sections focus the information gained from the interviews under headings which relate both to the whole curriculum process as set out in *Curriculum Development in the Education of Adults* (FEU, 1984) and to the prompts in the pro-forma.

Location of provision

54. The main centres of educational opportunities were provided by the LEA and were a mixture of discrete dual and multi-use buildings. In the case of adult education provision, by far the greater amount was programmed in the evenings on secondary school sites.

Content of courses/provision

55. In addition to the full-time and part-time courses on offer at the Technical College and a full range of part-time adult education classes and community groups, there existed in 1984/5 a number of opportunities aimed especially at the 'disadvantaged' as identified in the Project Information Bulletin. While it can be said that each disadvantaged group was catered for somewhere to some extent, it would be hard to demonstrate that such provision was always widely available to the potential student clientele. Some courses lasted only a short while, others were subject to renegotiation of funding annually. The area was large and travel arrangements not always convenient. Travel to centres can be expensive and time-consuming.

56. English as a second language teaching and other provision aimed at people of Asian origin was available in the areas where this population exists: the College was making increasing provision for one area largely outside this project's remit. Office skills and technologies were available in a number of guises in the College, also through the adult education main programme. This area of study was one where providers could have co-ordinated their programmes and publicity across the board to the benefit of potential students. More confident students already saw a path through to employment but the proliferation of options may not always be helpful to new recruits.

57. People with physical and mental disabilities were catered for, though mostly due to individual workers' commitment rather than policy, and mainly when the students were in hospitals. Distinct courses in main centres and access to the mainstream programme were lacking.

58. The initiatives for women were chiefly to be found at Maypole Community Centre and the College, the latter's programme being funded and determined almost exclusively by MSC and the former by the Institute's adult education budget and local fund raising. Links between the two did not exist explicitly, though many learning opportunities were available via the main programme for adults, which could bridge the space between a student's first adult encounter with learning and a college course.

59. Other specific provision for the unemployed had been made through drop-in centres and these mainly attracted young men. The learning content in these groups was marginal and largely consisted of outdoor leisure pursuits and sport. Community workers in the area have put on short courses or taster sessions in the daytime with out-of-work people in mind. These endeavours take up a great amount of time in planning and marketing but are rarely capitalised on by a guarantee of extended funding or ratification of reordered priorities of a worker's time and budget.

Purpose of provision

60. The range of opportunities can be set against the five possible objectives of education provision for unemployed people as stated in *Adult Unemployment and the Curriculum* by Watts and Knasel:

(1) Employability: to help unemployed people to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes which will increase their chances of finding and keeping a job.

(a) Basic skills (oracy, literacy, numeracy) required for employability.

(b) Awareness of areas of employment not previously considered.

(c) Occupational knowledge, skills and attitudes required for particular areas of employment.

(d) Job search and job acquisition skills.

(e) Job retention skills.

(f) Knowledge, skills and attitudes for foreseeing forces which may affect prospects in different areas of employment.

(2) Coping: to help unemployed people to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes which will help them to cope with being unemployed.

(a) Knowledge of welfare rights (unemployment benefits, redundancy rights, housing benefits, etc.) and skills of claiming such rights.

(b) Knowledge, skills and attitudes for handling a limited budget while maintaining health and a balanced diet.

(c) Do-it-yourself skills.

(d) Awareness of local possibilities for informal economy activities.

(e) Awareness of psychological effects of being unemployed (including effects of social pressures, effects on family relationships, etc.) and skills for coping with them.

(f) Knowledge of support services and sources of help in the community.

(3) Context: to help unemployed people to understand the extent to which the responsibility for being unemployed lies with society rather than with the individual, and to explore possible forms of social, political and community action related to unemployment.

(a) Awareness of possible economic, political and social causes of unemployment, and possible responses to it.

(b) Skills for engaging in social, political and community action related to unemployment.

(4) Leisure: to help unemployed people to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes which will help them to make good use of their increased 'leisure' time.

(a) Knowledge, skills and attitudes related to existing or new interests (e.g. hobbies).

(b) Awareness of local possibilities for voluntary community work, skill exchanges, etc.

(c) Awareness of educational opportunities, and knowledge and skills for obtaining access to them.

(d) Skills for managing use of own time.

(5) *Opportunity creation: to help unemployed people to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes which will enable them to create their own livelihood.*

(a) Knowledge, skills and attitudes related to becoming self-employed or setting up a small business/co-operative.

(b) Awareness of alternative self-sustaining life styles.

61. Evaluated in these terms the programme could have been said to go some way towards meeting objectives (1) and (4). Parts of the mainstream programme made opportunities for (5) through household and other craft classes. Knowledge of welfare rights, coping with psychological effects of unemployment and awareness of 'informal economy' activities were absent, as were (3) and (5).

Clientele

62. Although most categories in the Project Information Bulletin had some provision specifically assigned to their needs, there were some notable omissions. These were:

- ☐ day-time provision with crèche for young parents not available except Maypole – seven classes only – and Highfield Hall;
- ☐ no full-time centre for use in the day except Highfield Hall in the east, the College having no crèche or facilities for adults to congregate and socialise in appropriate surroundings;
- ☐ middle-aged clients were virtually absent and this could be connected with the lack of opportunity for objectives (3) and (5) in particular.

Frequency and duration of meetings

63. The conventional arrangements for 1½ – 2½-hour sessions still predominate in adult education. This appeared to suit the majority of participants though longer periods for some crafts were thought to be desirable by some providers, for instance four hours for car maintenance or DIY skills. For some students, family life styles required that sessions were contained within school hours. Arrangements for cheap bus fares also confirmed this. One course for women at the College was positively inconvenient in this respect with a 9am start. Also weekend opportunities were virtually nil, as was family learning provision, with only Swanshurst Centre beginning to make a start in this direction. Most wasteful of energy was the short-term course with no arguable option to extend which could mean that, on the one hand, lessons learned may not be capitalised on and, on the other, word-of-mouth publicity had no chance of establishing itself.

Funding

64. The provision in adult education was virtually all LEA-funded, with some minor input from other sources – e.g. community associations, hospital (accommodation, materials, transport), centre fund-raising, coffee bar etc. Occasionally equipment resources (such as typewriters in the case of 'A Taste of Typing') had also been sought elsewhere or borrowed. In the College, however, little of this specialised provision was rate-borne, being mostly funded by MSC. The most noticeable feature was the variation in funding between the two major LEA providers – adult education and further education. The latter's provision seemed almost exclusively concerned with skills for employment rather than learning for living and citizenship.

Student fees

65. Sometimes there were no fees (as with MSC-funded provision), at other times payment was termly, weekly pro-rata, weekly as a nominal sum, waived altogether or by negotiation – this latter being very much a device of co-ordinators/centre heads willing to balance the books by some other means and unwilling to enforce regulations which they knew would

cause students to turn away. To a non-student, the overwhelming picture was of considerable variation in fees and arrangements for paying them, forms to fill in etc. This must remain so to a considerable extent for as long as there exists a number of purses or sources which prevent the providers from operating with a single budget and accounting system.

Staffing

66. There was a wide variety of staffing arrangements across the range of provision made for out-of-work adults by the voluntary sector through to the LEA's many centres. There were full- and part-time workers; those whose entire job was concerned with this work, others for whom it was only a small part; some were in permanent posts, others temporary and others sessional. They may have been given the work rather than chosen it, taken it on for lack of a real job or initiated the provision because they saw a need not being met.

67. Expectations of the staff from employers/funders also varied greatly: some had to adhere to curricula, timing, recruitment procedures and monitoring requirements which were set by agencies other than their own institutions; others set their objectives almost autonomously in consultation with colleagues and line managers. The greater the freedom, the lower the budget, it seemed. In the case of Adult Basic Education (ABE) and ESL there was good support and training available, though the workers could suffer from being isolated from mainstream arrangements.

68. A degree of isolation or separateness existed for different reasons at both ends of the scale: in the College the staff involved tended to be the lowest paid and felt that their work was not seen by colleagues as central to the College's provision; community workers and Community Programme workers, on the other hand, were cut off by the very locations of their centres and the fact that they worked in isolation there for very few hours per day – the latter fact demands from them all kinds of additional efforts in their own time simply to 'keep in touch'.

Staff support and training

69. Where there had been close links with the Training and Special Projects Team, either formally through an organiser, as in the case of ABE and ESL work, or from an individual's motivation, then workers had a sense of being given support and confidence. This was evident in community workers whose responsibilities were considerable and borne individually as much as collectively. Their own networks, involving regular meetings, were felt to be most supportive – this applied to ABE, ESL and community work staff.

70. However, other staff felt vulnerable in the face of their responsibilities. This applied, for instance, to centre heads who had held meetings in their own time to discuss curriculum development problems and practicalities. Lecturers in the College also felt vulnerable in that they carried a burden of responsibility towards their students and the College without any concomitant share in the decision-making processes which related to their responsibilities.

71. Where opportunities existed for staff to set objectives in consultation with colleagues and line managers this was felt to be supportive and a training in itself, provided proper review was undertaken. A number of workers felt that, in addition to objectives relating to the tasks, personal appraisal would be a support. This was rarely found to be undertaken on a regular basis. Overall the most neglected staff in terms of support and training were the Community Programme workers whose personal material resources were probably the lowest and for whom little help was provided in taking up training opportunities.

72. There was an appreciation throughout the survey of the difficulties of arranging training around work commitments and of the costs involved. On the whole the most keenly felt need was for opportunities to meet and learn from colleagues in similar developing areas of work. This was desired not as an antidote to isolation so much as a real means of ensuring that:

- ☐ any individual worker was well apprised of the totality of opportunities for clients;
- ☐ good practice was shared;
- ☐ bridges could be devised in the curriculum;
- ☐ duplication of effort was avoided.

At the time of the survey there was no structure which could have met this need.

Counselling the students

73. Most students need some advice and counselling, but many workers felt less than adequate to meet this need beyond the point of straightforward information and advice on matters relating to their own field of responsibility. For instance, information and advice given at enrolment times would be confidently handled; discussion of a potential students' longer term goals might not. Enrolment sessions could be occasions for greater opportunities to pick up information and advice, but time is short in adult education for the actual process of enrolling, and funds had not been made available with which to extend the sessions, nor had tutors been strictly required to attend as part of the job.

74. The College Counsellor, who had a team of colleagues with a small number of counselling sessions on their timetables, was under considerable pressure to meet the student needs and had himself undertaken to train further education colleagues across the city to ease the burden.

75. The greatest omission observed generally by staff was of time and skill to deal with students who need, as a prerequisite for appropriate choice and handling of study, to address such questions as:

- ☐ What are my aims?
- ☐ What are my strengths and successes so far in life?
- ☐ What skills and knowledge do I still need?
- ☐ What are the possibilities for me and where do I start?
- ☐ How am I getting on?
- ☐ Where do I go from here?

76. The Study Skills Unit (SSU) in the College showed the staff's awareness of students' need for counselling (among other needs) and they were clearly and justifiably more confident in their ability to take the initiative – counselling for students was simply part of the College package deal, whereas it was not in adult education and community work. Apart from enrolment times, the SSU and other College counselling provision, any counsel given was informal and this was the case throughout.

How provision was publicised

77. Publicity was seen as crucial by workers at all levels and perceived as a growing 'extra' to their teaching and other commitments. It can be looked at in terms of:

- ☐ the means or type of publicity
- ☐ the destinations
- ☐ the agencies of dissemination
- ☐ the facilities available to workers

78. The *means* used included a prospectus, brochure, leaflets, posters, the press – by advertisement or feature – radio, TV and word-of-mouth. It seemed that the larger the institution, the more expensive the means of publicity. On the other hand, word-of-mouth networks as they existed around a local school or community centre reached those for whom the written (especially what might be deemed to be the *official*) word had less impact. Word-of-mouth also carried implicitly a recommendation. One feature of the publicity taken as a whole was that it does not cross-refer from one agency to another, except across adult education, youth and community which included ABE and ESL and refered to college, YTS and the Training and Special Project Team's programme.

79. *Destinations* or targets of publicity reflected the nature of the programme. Publicity was sent or placed where people could see it if they were shopping, job hunting, borrowing books, visiting a doctor, using a community centre or listening to the radio and reading local newspapers at home. Adult education brochures were delivered house-to-house as were leaflets about new developments (though to fewer homes).

80. *Agencies* dealing with publicity were also numerous: sometimes programmes represented an entire institution's provision (a college, institute, MSC scheme); sometimes it gave information on one aspect of a programme (ESL, computing, women's opportunities) which would be promoted by a co-ordinator, centre head or tutor. Occasionally existing students undertook to distribute posters and users of community centres were often involved in spreading the word. A considerable number of networks for dissemination existed.

81. *Facilities* for producing publicity varied greatly. For some it was basic handwriting and spirit duplicator or typewriter and Gestetner. More and more workers were familiarising themselves with Letraset, artwork illustration and scanners to produce more eye-catching material. Sometimes expensive processes and materials were paid for, as in the case of the adult education brochure and FE college prospectus. The College scored highly in this department with a technical reprographic staff and facilities for printing and binding a finished booklet.

Who devised the course and delivery style?

82. There was evidence in the survey that there was involvement in this exercise at most levels. However, few cases existed where every level of interest was involved – that is, student, tutor, co-ordinator/programme deviser, head of institution, funding agency. At one end of the spectrum a partnership of MSC (funding agency) and college tutors worked out a curriculum within the requirements of the funding agency, but consultation with students was unlikely to have been part of the negotiation. At the other end of the spectrum, users of a centre requested or suggested an area of study and, with appropriate consideration of an overall budget, a centre head or community worker would launch a taster or short course – this arrangement would not necessarily have included the Institute Principal. In the latter case the curriculum could be said to be very much student-led, though it must be noted that, in the experience of some programme devisers, students already using the centres were not always seeking changes to the programme and may not have been in the best position to suggest what would attract new students.

Obtaining feedback/evaluating courses

83. Having attracted students who stayed the course, it might be expected that appropriate feedback from them was always sought, particularly where a course was new. This was not always the case and was lacking even when considerable funding had been made available, for example on MSC courses, and more often than not it was optional as to whether an evaluation of the course was sought from students. Tutors frequently took this initiative themselves and centre heads and co-ordinators carried out oral and questionnaire-based evaluations with students. None of this was required or formalised and standardised. ABE workers and individual tutors and workers were exceptions to this but their efforts may have been undermined by the fact that no-one else (e.g. those who decide on funding) was expecting the evaluation or listening out for the student feedback.

Enrolment analysis

84. Some conclusions from the enrolment analysis were:

- ☐ The widely based AE programme provided a comprehensive choice of mainly non-advanced education.
  NB. We were dealing here only in *tutored* classes.
- ☐ This provision was attractive to unemployed men and women and to other disadvantaged groups.
- ☐ 17.3% of the class enrolments were disadvantaged – i.e. unemployed, single parent, in receipt of DHSS benefit. NB. This survey did not include (early) retired, handicapped, those of ethnic minority origin, under 18s or unwaged women. The 17.3% is absolutely minimal as an indicator of the actual 'disadvantaged' enrolment.
- ☐ Students in these categories chose a wide range of learning opportunities.
- ☐ Of a total enrolment (excluding ABE) of 2889, 426 students were 'disadvantaged'.

  Of the 426,322 were unemployed (UB40), of whom

  116 enrolled in 2nd chance/training classes
  34 enrolled in household crafts and skills classes
  100 enrolled in arts and leisure classes
  22 enrolled in sports classes

  Other disadvantaged enrolled as follows:

  20 enrolled in 2nd chance/training classes
  43 enrolled in household crafts and skills
  29 enrolled in arts and leisure classes
  12 enrolled in sports classes

  426 people attending, without special incentives, at their own expense and with no expectations necessarily of work to follow, represented an encouraging response. Their attendance offered considerable scope to the Education Department for marketing other opportunities.

Curriculum development issues

Maximising contact with the adult unemployed through adult education centres

85. It is clear that a network of centres which provide day and evening classes and have a broad appeal do attract significant numbers of unemployed people. This brings them into contact, and often their only contact, with the world of education and training. However, there needs to be wider and sustained publicity to maximise use of this facility. Better use should be made of adult education centres for the provision of guidance and counselling, and to present an intelligible approach to training (if there is one).

Planning

86. The high percentage of adult unemployed and other disadvantaged attending day-time classes pointed to the fact that people whose daily working routines have ceased can find keeping a day-time commitment valuable in terms of gaining some structure in their lives. Equally one would hardly expect an unemployed person to sit around all day and then find the prospect of leaving the house after dark, perhaps just when the family has come home, either attractive or appropriate. There needs to be more continuous, purposeful, broadly-based daytime provision. Planning and decision making should be undertaken with this in mind. For those controlling resources, their perceptions of potential, skills and commitment and the support they will need from the Department are crucial to the development of the curriculum.

Publicity/marketing

87. Bearing in mind that the survey was carried out shortly after the autumn enrolment and that numbers of students in attendance decline through the year, it would seem that attention should be paid to boosting publicity (though it cannot be overlooked that other factors affect the drop in attendance, for example if a course is not what was expected, poor initial counselling, change of personal circumstances, adverse weather etc).

88. Launching new classes after September and attracting new students to established or vulnerable classes is a constant worry to centre heads and was frequently mentioned in the survey. One centre, due to some uncertainty as to which area it was deemed to be in, benefited from having its programme publicised through two brochures rather than one, and this resulted in a significant upswing in the enrolment numbers.

Feedback and evaluation

89. The most common form of evaluation (both of enrolment and of the value and appropriateness of classes) was casual and depended on the perceptions and experience of staff involved. Some centre heads devised questionnaires for students and obtained a good response. These were usually concerned with publicity and promotion. The heads then took considerable time in analysing them and using them as a basis for evaluating current systems and modifying future programmes and delivery systems.

90. The students' view of local provision, and their reaction to possible alternatives in, for instance, the setting, fees and other arrangements, course content and progression to further study, is hard to obtain other than by personal contact and intelligent surmise. The value of knowing the students' view was recognised, but time to devise a questionnaire and take it through each stage was not available. Such information would clearly be a valuable indicator to decision-makers, prior to any change.

91. The feedback obtained already (via the centre heads questionnaire) could be even more valuable if carried out across the board to an agreed pattern. Time to do it would have to be built into staff contracts and action assured in response to the information obtained. Exercises in participative curriculum development such as this could have a number of beneficial effects:

- ☐ effective and continuing dialogue between students/tutors/supervisors/management;
- ☐ a sound basis for planning and use of resources;
- ☐ more efficient use of time by virtue of less time spent devising curricula on a 'hit and miss' basis;
- ☐ more sharing of good practice and experience.

Interviews with unemployed adults

Purpose of the interviews

92. The purpose of the interviews was to consult unemployed adults at length and in a relaxed setting. They were met individually and asked to talk about their experience of unemployment, its impact on their families, their memories of their education, how they spent their time and what their hopes were for the future. We wished to build as full a picture as possible of the groups that the project aimed to serve and produce a set of profiles complementary to those found in other surveys.

How the interviews were carried out

93. A number of colleagues working in a variety of neighbourhoods who had close working ties with individuals and groups were asked to be the interviewers. They chose their respondents and organised the time and meeting place. It was made clear to interviewers that we were looking for a balance between sexes and races that would reflect their communities. Originally we sought to interview 40 people, but resignations and job changes made this impossible.

Neighbourhoods chosen

94. All the neighbourhoods were municipal housing estates with modest provision of community centre or tenants hall. One estate is early post-war in bad repair with few facilities; one is of high-rise flats now with many older residents and the third is new low-rise housing around a junior and infant school with a community hall on site. Two of the interviewers were part-time community workers (three or four sessions per week) and at that time one was a Community Programme worker in the area.

The interviewees

95. Fifteen men and nine women were interviewed, mostly in their homes. Their ages ranged from 20-53 years, the average being 34. All candidates were known already to the interviewers. On average each interview took two hours plus time for organising and writing up. The only things which all the 24 adults had in common were:

- ☐ being unemployed
- ☐ having confidence in the interviewer
- ☐ being prepared to talk

Responses

About work: why interviewees became unemployed

96. Of the 24, five left or lost jobs due to ill health or injury – in one case it was a parent's ill health. One of the five was sacked following injury. Four others (women) left work to start families and one man gave up work to care for his seven children when his wife left him. Seven were made redundant, three of them due to closure of the company or liquidation. Two were sent to detention centres. Four simply left, in two cases due to bad feelings with workmates or management, and one interviewee was not specific on the point. Roughly half had been unemployed several times.

97. The kind of work people had done is too varied to mention in full. Three facts stand out: first, there were at least 115 job experiences between the 24, not counting short periods of part-time or casual work, secondly, the number of years in unemployment range from four to seven, thirdly very few spoke of their work as anything more than a means of income and an opportunity to belong to a friendly group. There seemed to have been little vocation or other satisfaction at the time of employment. Having become unemployed, however, the loss of status and the desire for a return to the satisfaction of having a meaningful role was common.

98. The extent of previous training was limited. Two interviewees had been apprenticed to the building trade, one to a cabinet maker and one as a motor vehicle mechanic, although the latter did not complete his apprenticeship. The instrument maker was trained on the job, while one interviewee did six months YOP training and one did a year's nursing. The remaining 17 had no formal training at all. Nevertheless, a wide range of skills had been acquired during the working lives of these men and women.

99. Attitudes were harder to identify. Without explicitly regarding work as a social experience, many comments and, indeed, reasons given for changing jobs included or implied dissatisfaction with treatment by management and workmates. Such feelings contributed significantly to decisions to leave a job, for example:

'... there was a change in management and the new people were very strict. This created a bad working environment and it became the worst place (he) had known for "back stabbing". ... The workshop was badly organised ... the Production Manager was very "pigheaded" and very little technical knowledge existed above shop floor level ... This lack of expertise at the top was very frustrating.'

'... did not feel appreciated. Only time he felt needed was if overtime was required for an urgent job.'

'... At 15 she found herself mildly sexually harassed by one of the male supervisors. She seemed to cope fairly well with the situation, but he warned her that if she complained they would both lose their jobs ... Eventually she left because of a dispute with one of her colleagues.'

'... For the last two years she was here she became a section leader. However, this made a barrier between herself and her previous friends. They did not like taking orders from someone who was near their own age and had been one of their group. An unhappy time.'

'... The bosses never acknowledged the fact that you were any good.'

'... left work because of a dispute with one of her colleagues.'

'... The foreman and senior manager were quite friendly but she felt they tended to "pick" on her as "dogsbody" – she was regularly sent out on errands.'

100. Equally, fair treatment and friendliness were acknowledged and appreciated as factors that make work worthwhile:

'They were all good gaffers here. I was with the same group of friendly workmates moving from site to site.'

'... considered this job hard work but rewarding. A very busy but friendly staff, and the students always talked to the catering assistants.'

'The tradesmen who trained him were strict and there was no favouritism. Their training was excellent and they liked to be addressed as "Sir".'

'The owners of the shop were rough and ready but very kind.'

101. Some interviewees regretted occasions when they felt they had been their own worst enemies:

'One Saturday he overslept and did not go in to work. Owners were furious and he left. Said he regretted he had not pulled his weight in this job.'

'It was very hard work and they faced long queues of people. They kept asking for help but this was not forthcoming and, in the end, both girls walked out. Later, bitterly regretted this action.'

Family life

102. Of the 24 interviewees, 20 had been or were married and had children. The remaining four were unmarried men in their 20s, all in some measure dependent on family or friends for a home and support. Of the other 20, 17 mentioned some sort of fairly serious emotional impact of unemployment on themselves and/or their partners including depression, guilt, frustration, pressure, bad temper and tension. Others referred to being made to feel guilty, 'a pain in the neck', or a scrounger and others felt criticised by neighbours or older family members. One referred to hating the lack of freedom in unemployed dependency.

103. Lack of money was referred to (19 times) with a number of effects mentioned: on children, tension between couples, lack of opportunities for family life, social life curtailed, inability to maintain the home, resentment of hand-outs, constant rows, feelings of inadequacy that one cannot provide. Despite all this, only three interviewees of the 20 with families were separated or divorced, though others spoke of conflict in their marriages. Women in particular felt hemmed in and 'less of a person' when not working, especially when 'stuck with all the household jobs' – these had been shared when the women were out at work. Lack of money, far from being a catalyst to forming stronger bonds in a community, seems to drive people indoors to separation, even isolation. Not even the extended family is immune to this effect, with several cases of loss of contact and families dispersing being quoted.

104. Apart from the impact on family life of loss of income and stressed relationships, the unemployed person felt a loss of importance and status. Inadequacy and loss of confidence in one's ability to regain work was spoken of, as well as a feeling that life is passing by.

105. In some cases, however, positive attitudes were what impressed. Many of those who felt relegated spoke of being glad to be alive and facing each new day afresh. Hope of work remained, in the face of all statistics and probabilities. A number of men had discovered the pleasure and benefits of being at home to see their children growing up and there were two cases of husbands being unemployed and their wives in work. Another man had found immense fulfilment in an absorbing hobby (pigeon-fancying) and was proud to be acknowledged as an expert in this. No-one's story came across as a complaint, even when disclosing hardships. The four single young men had different perspectives and experiences. One felt friendless, another relied entirely on a community centre for friends and support, and had been in trouble with the law, a third had left home at 17 and lived with his girlfriend, the fourth saw himself as having entered a life of crime and saw as his main contribution that of warning his brothers and sisters against following in his footsteps. None of them had worked at anything for longer than a few months, two of them scarcely at all. Theirs were bleak prospects but hopelessness rather than bitterness characterised their accounts.

First chance education

106. None of the 24 interviewees had left school with a GCE or equivalent certificate. One had since obtained an 'A' level and others had attended college as a day-release arrangement.

107. The majority stated no reasons to regret any lack of formal attainment at school, though eight revealed either that they had wanted to stay on (but lack of parental or teacher encouragement, family income needs, or lack of confidence prevented this), or that they wished they had their chances again. There were nine instances of family pressures or expectations overriding a wish to stay on at school or in further education. Two referred specifically to fathers who refused permission for them to stay on and others mentioned subtle pressures from home such as – 'They felt art school would have been posh'. Five interviewees stated that their preferred study in further education would have been art.

108. Recollections of the influence of teachers were strong and colourful – 'hated teachers' (5), 'made you feel unimportant' (2), 'were bullies' (2), 'cannot remember any at all, were hopeless' (3); headteachers could be 'just a figurehead', 'very distant', 'remote' or 'showed you up', 'made an example of you', 'were bombastic and unnatural'. Others, however, had been greatly influenced for the better by some teachers and these stood out in the interviewees' memories as people who 'were very understanding', 'always listened carefully', 'brought out talent', 'were easy to talk to privately', 'were strict but interesting and humorous'. Headteachers were thought of as 'nice' by two interviewees.

109. Certain memories were clearly painful – being locked in a cupboard which resulted in a teacher's sacking, 'forgetting' cookery ingredients, being late for assembly – all recalled with tinges of guilt or shame. Where even one individual teacher related well to the child, however, this was often enough to quell more negative memories: 'one English teacher was very good and taught me how to put a value on things', 'the art teacher was very encouraging', 'one teacher took me on outdoor pursuits' – the only clear memories of school life.

110. If overall expressed memories of school were categorised as positive/neutral/negative, then the largest group falls in the last category, with most comments keenly expressed: 'couldn't wait to leave', 'never wanted to go back', 'always looked forward to leaving school'. Fourteen had not liked school, seven had mixed feelings, three really liked it. Five remembered being bullied (sometimes by teachers), five remembered playing truant. One person's main debt to school learning was that it enabled him to count backwards more easily when playing darts, another that maths (of velocity) had made calculations for pigeon flying easier.

Use of time: hobbies and interests

111. The single most staggering fact in this area was the sheer range of activities that interviewees were involved in – 42 in all – that can be regarded as leisure pursuits. A further 44 were listed (some replicate those already pursued) as activities that people would like to undertake given an opportunity. In each list several interests are mentioned a number of times. Such hobbies and interests fulfill a number of needs: they are creative (crafts, arts, cookery etc.) and/or recreative (reading, sports, fishing); they fill time; they can bring one into contact with others; they provide some purpose and structure to the day; some help to make th money go round (gardening/allotment, knitting, sewing, cookery) and others prompt one to think about the wider 'world' (documentaries, reading). What we do not know is whether there was much sharing of interests and skills within all the activity and whether individuals felt any urge to improve their performance – matters which may concern those wishing to develop the provision of adult education in these neighbourhoods.

112. It is noteworthy that nothing in the first list (activities currently undertaken) but 21 suggestions in the second list (activities interviewees would like to engage in) concerned matters of studying the human condition and personal fulfilment (e.g. people's history, living on a low income, local government studies, recording childhood memories, feeling confident, the peace campaign, becoming secure, housing policy). This bears out the findings in the survey of provision which pointed to a lack of opportunity locally for understanding unemployment in its world context and its impact on individuals.

113. Just as the large range of jobs that had been held in times of employment points to a reservoir of skills and starting-points for renewal, so the 'hobbies' information again underlines this potential and actual range of competences. There is evidence of a deal of energy, sometimes put to good use in the time available, sometimes quelled by a loss of motivation and feeling of frustration that the individual is helpless to make it all produce a real job. Several interviewees talked of tiredness and sleeping late. The younger men tended to lack virtually any sense of direction or motivation.

Aspirations

114. It was difficult for the interviewers to prompt their interviewees to articulate their hopes and aspirations in that there was a relative lack of great hopes and ambition. This may not be out of line with the responses one would receive from asking the same questions of people with jobs, however.

115. The predominant aspiration was to work, and if not, then to acquire income with which to provide for one's family. Some could be specific about this and mentioned such things as joining the army, self-employment, gaining a City and Guilds in painting and decorating, working outdoors, being a home help, driving. Others were vague but just as keen to work – they aspired to 'a decent job and pay', 'to work for myself', 'to achieve something and be depended on' or 'I can't face a jobless future'. Some centred their aspirations on the home, 'I'd like to have a home', 'move away', 'would like tools to do jobs in the home'. For others it centred on their families: 'I'd like to fulfil my responsibilities', 'get a better chance for the kids', 'give my husband his self-respect back', 'go away for a camping holiday', 'see that my children do well'. The modesty of the aspirations was striking in every case. Still others had non-work hopes: to learn to drive, be a peace campaigner, help young people, help kids on the estate. For a few it was 'take life as it comes', 'I feel life is passing me by', 'I haven't the energy', 'I'm too anxious' or 'I'm too bogged down to think of the future'.

Concluding observations

116. There was an awareness of missed educational opportunities and a wish either to make up for this or to seek new paths. The most wished-for opportunities educationally were those which would improve understanding of the world and of one's self and empower one to handle one's self and one's circumstances more satisfactorily.

117. Adaptability would not apparently be a problem, most people having tried numerous jobs and activities already. There was very little bitterness – 'there's always someone worse off than yourself' was said several times. There was, however, some outrage at the injustice of unemployment and little faith in trade unions. The interviewers themselves found the exercise fascinating and enjoyable, though draining: 'people really opened up', 'reflecting on your experience can be so beneficial'. They were all impressed by the way the interview had acted as a revelation to the interviewees themselves.

4 ACTION: PILOT SCHEMES

118. The second phase of the project consisted of piloting a curriculum development programme planned as a result of information and messages obtained during the first phase. The means of information gathering had been:

- ☐ an initial mapping of provision;
- ☐ a street poll of 100 unemployed adults;
- ☐ data from 435 adults asked about leisure and hobbies;
- ☐ a survey of enrolment in September 1985;
- ☐ 185 doorstep interviews in the Asian Community.

119. From these sources we learned, in summary:

- ☐ that a great variety of learning opportunities are taken up by unemployed adults;
- ☐ that local access to these is attractive and necessary for people on low incomes;
- ☐ that confidence among the long-term unemployed is low and reduces the motivation to seek out new opportunities;
- ☐ that opportunities to reflect on one's past experience and future potential as they relate to work and learning are beneficial, but rare;
- ☐ that there is widespread ignorance of the education, training and advice available;
- ☐ that ethnic minority families, particularly women, living in predominantly white areas are isolated and unlikely to seek learning opportunities at any distance from home, even when they recognise their needs;
- ☐ that face-to-face providers of learning opportunities for unemployed adults can feel isolated and handicapped in their work by lack of contact with other providers and ignorance of other provision;
- ☐ that approachable, sensitive staff can help those who are less confident to grow in confidence;
- ☐ that those who are long-term unemployed sustain a desire to understand their situation and condition better.

120. The strategy, therefore, was:

- ☐ to devise means of attracting those needing opportunities for learning as a bridge to employment and who through lack of confidence needed particular delivery styles;
- ☐ to do this through networks of workers who had contacts at a local level and could co-operate in devising curriculum opportunities according to clients' needs;
- ☐ to market energetically and via appropriate media;
- ☐ to recruit suitable staff for the tasks involved;
- ☐ to establish the means whereby providers could inform each other of the range of provision and benefit from each other's skills by exchange of good practice.

SETTING MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE AIMS

121. In each case the providers involved in setting up a pilot had aims in common. These were based on the policies of their institution, be it adult education centre, community centre, church or hospital, and on the established needs of unemployed adults. These had been identified either by the project's researchers or by the collaborating parties' inquiries, or both. For instance, women in groups at Maypole Centre had talked with the Centre Head, about courses they would like (courses: 2 Gaining Confidence, 3 Return to Learn, 4 Do-it-Herself) as had those at Warstock (course 22 Self Defence and Confidence Building). Unemployed members and staff in 'drop-ins' had identified a need for courses 8 and 9 (Welfare Benefits). Where the aims were nebulous or the need only guessed at, rather than truly identified, there was failure – as in the case of courses 5 (Study Skills) and 11 (Asian Studies). Uncertainty about need was part of the cause of failure in the former case and uncertainty about aims the partial cause in the latter.

PLANNING AND DESIGN

122. When planning a pilot, as many parties as possible with an interest in the venture were consulted and involved. There was contact in person between the Action Researcher and others, with arrangements confirmed in writing as discussed. This process of meeting to share planning helped other processes. For instance, the purpose of monitoring could be appreciated, increased contact with colleagues achieved, help with marketing enlisted.

123. In the case of Brandwood Open week (Appendix II), the inclusion of unemployed people in the planning made it possible to enlist the help of their friends for leafleting and help during the week.

124. Planning for the microwave cookery course was also assisted in the early stages by a disabled person and at all stages by therapists and ward staff at the hospital. Their inclusion assisted planning and provided the planning group with a sound perspective. Planning meetings provided opportunities for workers to clarify their ideas and reach an appreciation of their colleagues' different understanding and ways of working. For instance, the different styles and training of a tutor, a therapist, a community worker, a counsellor and a clergyman were all discussed during planning.

MARKETING

125. Maximum participation in marketing was encouraged by enlisting the help of known contacts, whether in classes, clubs, hospital wards or unemployed groups, and by use of the most immediately available means, for example, carefully and locally produced leaflets, free newspapers, radio and, above all, word-of-mouth.

126. The participatory approach to all aspects of development was important in this: the more people who have an interest in a scheme, the more promoters there are too. For instance, all the leafleting for the New Directions course (number 19), was done by unemployed men and women. Similar involvement in marketing was evident at Bells Farm, the church and Maypole – courses 2,3,4,12,13 and 16 for women, computer skills and drop-in advice.

DELIVERY

127. Most courses (18 in all) were planned for daytime. Two were residential, five evening, one teatime and one was a one-day event. The three 'failures' were all evening courses, demonstrating the truth of survey information which had guided us to day-time provision.

128. The length of a course and duration in hours was fixed according to its nature – constant provision of advice in a drop-in centre, but a short course for introducing people to computers, for example. Constant communication about progress and confidence between tutors and students was always a feature.

129. Through using the small amount of funding for pilots it was possible to avoid the damaging effect of uncertainty, which can be engendered in students when a class may be threatened with closure after a week or two due to low numbers. This gave pilots a realistic chance, and helped in other ways: co-ordinators and planners could feel that their efforts were worthwhile and students could take their learning seriously. Everyone involved could be more confident of a positive outcome and, if initial numbers were low, take steps to enlist new members. Ease of access was helped by crèches where necessary, a person always there to welcome students, refreshments, often prepared by the class and taken all together, pay-as-you-go fees or no fees, and opportunities to talk and be listened to about progress in learning. This was a form of formative guidance and counselling (built-in rather than presented as a separate session).

RESOURCES

130. Clarity about resources, whether of people or equipment, proved to be most welcome and enabled providers to work positively without being too anxious about numbers and budgets. No one scheme was well endowed. All benefited from a number of sources – borrowing, sharing, low rent etc. Administration of the staff budget remained the responsibility of the Action Researcher throughout. Much energy and enterprise was required from staff in providing computers, microwaves, storage space, child care etc. One important feature of resourcing was a small fund granted by a local charitable trust, which made it possible for instance for payments to casual staff to be made direct – for crèche supervision, canteen, bus fares, general expenses. The ready availability of the cash was what counted rather than the amount.

RECRUITING TUTORS

131. Staff were recruited by direct or indirect recommendations, by good contact with colleagues in adult and community education and by constantly marketing the project. Explaining the nature of the task and the project at the start was part of the briefing. The terms of the contract and expectations on behalf of the students were also explained and understood. On the whole the ability to relate to the client group was felt by providers to be the single most crucial asset in a tutor. The great majority of the tutors were unemployed themselves, though some had other occasional part-time work. This in itself made communication with students easier and brought a level of insight and commitment which would not have been achieved otherwise. Including tutors in as much planning and evaluation as possible was of value in that it capitalised on their unique skills and gave those who were unemployed maximum opportunity for improving their skills. Particular success was achieved by an unemployed Asian woman working on pilots 23 and 24 (Asian Outreach and ESL Dressmaking). Both her contribution to the project and what she gained from her involvement were remarkable.

132. This is how she expressed what her involvement meant to her:

'At the time when I joined the project I thought I would never work again and really felt like saying "no". But now I have gained so much confidence and have two part-time jobs.

I learned so much – how to get information and use it, how to make contact with people through work, how to make a contribution in meetings, where to go for advice and backing. I'm still learning, but feel confident to take initiatives and handle responsibilities. I'm not isolated anymore. I can handle all sorts of communication. I owe it to the project.'

133. Similarly, a disabled man, expertly briefed in welfare benefits, was a great bonus to that course as its tutor. The same was true of the Do-it-Herself tutor, whose skills had been learned through house renovation. In these, as in other cases, the staff themselves grew in confidence and competence. It was possible to recruit unemployed staff for all the following pilots:

1. *Brandwood Open Week*
2. *Gaining Confidence*
3. *Return to Learn*
4. *Do-it-Herself*
5. *Study Skills*
8. *Welfare Benefits*
9. *Welfare Benefits*
12. *Support to Churches Initiative*
13. *Cookery and Housecrafts*
14. *Photography*
15. *Know Your City*
16. *Computer Skills*
17. *Computer Skills*
18. *Computer Skills*
20. *Leadership Training Residential*
21. *Volunteer Training Residential*
22. *Self Defence and Confidence Building*
23. *Asian Outreach*

EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK

134. Each pilot was evaluated jointly by a tutor/co-ordinator and a researcher using feedback from students and staff. A standard form was used, usually as part of the final session of the course, but the session would be conducted in such a way as to encourage relaxed comments. Discussion and review were taking place informally throughout the pilot's duration and feedback from that was included on the evaluation sheet.

135. The form included basic information about time, place, numbers, tutor, content, resources used and how obtained. It also invited feedback on how students had come to attend, what they had learned, whether there had been other benefits from attending, whether access and other arrangements for their welcome and comfort had been adequate, what they intended to do subsequently in terms of education and training.

136. Students and tutors were happy to participate in this exercise, knowing that its value was as much for students of the future as for themselves.

137. Points to note when including evaluation in the curriculum process are:

- ☐ Time needs to be allowed for this within the time that staff and students have available. Relying on goodwill and extra time will not achieve the desired co-operation of all the participants and distortion may occur where only the less pressured/more articulate few are prepared to co-operate.
- ☐ The level of co-operation may well depend on the careful recruitment of staff initially. An openness to assessment and review in the interests of best practice are essential attributes.

- ☐ A delivery style which allows good communication in class and convinces students that what they say is heard and heeded will ensure the least biased or restrained feedback. Time and again adults learners have spoken of their timidity and apprehension on becoming students again. Students' comments show that the opportunity to be listened to matters very much, as in the case of this student:

  'I think the course was excellent. I am disappointed that the course has to finish. The course has been very productive for me personally and I am going on to "night school". I was very grateful for the crèche. I certainly have more confidence. The small group I think was much better than a large group. There was more individual attention and the teacher had time to listen to us.'

- ☐ Encouraging students to speak up and tutors to listen more (not always a teacher's best skill) can reveal needs and potential that may not otherwise be apparent. For example, the inability of unemployed young men to cope with normal city travel arrangements had not been apparent even to those in daily contact with them. Similarly, women attending the 'Do-it-Herself' course were even less competent than expected, 'unbelievably ignorant' as their (women) tutor commented. On the other hand, the potential of students with disabilities had been grossly underestimated. They argued for their hospital staff to arrange shopping expeditions and set up their own rota of jobs for the class. Their general expectations of themselves rose, their speech improved – it was even rumoured that hospital food improved! Teaching in a way that allows constant feedback from students and review is more effective teaching, wherever the students start from.

- ☐ We must assume that we do not know it all when dealing with adults who have been learning-avoiders. Whether our expectations of them err on the side of being too high or too low, we may fail them.

STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

138. In launching a staff training and development scheme a list of contacts from the initial survey was drawn up and added to by those on it. This contact network was a strength. At meetings, time was allowed for informal chat before and after formal business and shared planning of the group's programme was appreciated as a way of acknowledging that everyone's skill and need to develop were important to the whole group.

139. Because of job changes and new work projects there was a constant turnover of membership and having an up-to-date contact list with names, job title, and phone numbers was of great benefit in creating a firm network. Similarily, notes of past meetings with reminders of future ones sent through the post, backed up by telephone contact, had helped to convince members that they were valuable to the group as well as vice versa.

140. Opportunities for job shadowing quickly established for some a greater appeciation of other colleagues' working lives. Exchanges between ABE workers, Jobcentre staff, community workers and college staff were particularly valuable in helping those involved.

141. The issue of release of staff needs to be addressed if the outreach capacity of colleges is to be fully explored. Attention was drawn to the need for this kind of change in institutional patterns by Watts and Knasel.

CASE-STUDY: STARTING A STAFF TRAINING DEVELOPMENT GROUP

The origins

142. Attention had been given to the need for support and training, as perceived by staff themselves. Further needs were identified as a result of the experience of Brandwood Open Week when the following was expressed at the evaluation session:

'Workers felt inadequate to deal with the evidently serious needs of those who came. They needed information and guidance skills themselves.'

143. At the same time staff who worked on the week's activities were keen to learn more together and felt that the week itself had been a staff development exercise. Features of the scheme which went some way in this direction, were:

- ☐ involvement of staff and volunteers in planning and preparation;
- ☐ opportunity to receive and offer feedback on each day's activity;
- ☐ clearly specified roles.

144. Information about the available opportunities for training in the service was given, though at that time specific REPLAN Training Courses were not available.

The proposals

145. The following brief proposal was presented to the Steering Committee in October 1985. This had been derived from the staff training needs stated during the first survey of provision and Brandwood Open Week:

There have been constant pleas and comments made to the project worker by staff that they did not have information of developments elsewhere or of colleagues engaged in similar work.

146. There needs to be available for workers:

- ☐ *Knowledge/information*
- ■ a map of provision city wide
- ■ a list of area initiatives and workers
- ■ a development plan indicating clear priorities
- ■ a guide to alternative funding obtainable (through the Authority and beyond it
- ■ an insight into colleges' work and provision
- ☐ *Support*
- ■ regular exchanges of information and good practice
- ■ opportunity for shared planning
- ■ regular updating
- ■ some sort of bulletin for students and staff giving information on adult learning opportunities
- ☐ *Career development* The recognition that workers can benefit greatly from a change of job, new direction or temporary post is important to remember. Regular reviewing of posts and workers could be a strength to both them and the service. The following could be some of the ways forward:
- ■ training and development interviews for all staff where negotiations can take place or specific training/job change;
- ■ opportunities for post exchanges - broadly throughout the service, for a month, term or year;
- ■ presentations of good practice within the programme of staff support arrangements, to keep workers aware of all the possibilities open to them.

- ☐ *Skills* Specific skill training is at present provided by the Training and Special Projects Team. Much of this can be a resource to staff and volunteers dealing with the education and training of unemployed adults. The following are recommended as matters for consideration in future planning of training:
  - more opportunity for shared training with colleagues in other branches, e.g. colleges. This would help cross-fertilisation of ideas and breakdown misunderstandings of the various responsibilities;
  - a seminar on joint/team/interagency work and approaches;
  - information packs and the skills needed to provide guidance in using them;
  - an evaluation service which encourages tutors and organisers to evaluate their provision and enables them to do so.

147. Note needs to be taken of the part-timers' needs particularly. Until we find the money to include their training in their workload, there can be little real expectation that they will undergo training at the same time. The delivery of a flexible service in a rapidly changing world depends, to some extent, on the employment of part-time staff. This applies equally to colleges and adult education. Failure to recognise this in hard cash terms is likely to affect work with unemployed adults.

Responses to training needs

148. It was proposed to offer six to seven sessions which would aim to cover a broad spectrum of areas of knowledge or skill. Participation in these would prepare for and begin a study forum for workers directly involved in adult continuing education and training work and outreach.

Cost

149. Any input to a session would arise from the group itself or from workers engaged elsewhere in Birmingham's Education Department. Cost of materials would be borne by the project. Part-time staff would be paid as workers to undertake this training/work on the understanding that they both demonstrably use the knowledge and skills acquired and pass it on to associates in the field. Other staff should be helped to negotiate time off in lieu.

The organisation and progress of the staff training and development group

Suggestions for seven starter sessions

150. These were tabled at the first meeting of the Planning Group.

- ☐ Alternative approaches to adult unemployment. Politics and policies/philosophy/constraints.
- ☐ What we do already (inputs from college, Community Programme, youth and community, adult education).
- ☐ Skills and knowledge we need (involve REPLAN group).
- ☐ Job search and self-presentation.
- ☐ Information and guidance. Setting goals with clients. Adult Learners Enquiry Centre and Hall Green Library Staff.
- ☐ Return to Learn students' needs.
- ☐ Mapping the route and information network.

151. Spin-offs might include:

- ☐ Adult education/further education/planning group for work with adult unemployed.
- ☐ Link with REPLAN group and regional advisory work.
- ☐ Curriculum development for adult unemployed cross-service network.

152. Practical arrangements were that all planning and actual meetings were held at Hall Green Technical College, the meetings in the Board Room. Coffee was arranged via the college canteen and paid for out of the project fund.

153. Letters of invitation for the first meeting were sent to people who had either had some contact with the project or been referred by colleagues. They included adult education, college, community and voluntary sector workers and co-operating agencies. This list had been discussed and approved by the Project Committee. Prior to each full meeting a planning group met to prepare for it. The planners were from adult education (1) and college staff (2), the Divisional Adviser, project worker, General Inspector (Adult Education Youth and Community) and City Co-ordinator for Adult Unemployed. Later a part-time support worker (of whom there were three in succession) was enlisted. On average four or five attended. The average attendance for full-scale meetings was 18.

Conclusion

154. If the characteristics of the development of the Staff Training and Development Group were set against the matrix of staff development approaches and their characteristics (*Planning Staff Development* Bulletin No 2., FEU, 1986.), the following would be the likely result. The Project Group would claim to have the characteristics which are ticked:

✓ Breadth of impact	✓ Shares resources
Professional development	✓ Encourages cross-fertilisation
Management development	✓ Requires co-ordination
✓ Subject updating	Easy control of content
Ease of application of training	Requires specific trainers
✓ Individual focused	✓ Personal development needs
✓ Flexible	✓ Participatory
✓ Informal	✓ External stimulus
✓ Addresses minority needs	✓ Uses/shares expertise
Provides up-to-date experience	Institutional development

5 FINDINGS – OUTCOMES

FINDINGS

155. The findings outlined in this section are those arising from the project which may be applied elsewhere in the adult and further education field.

Aims and policies

156. Curriculum development projects need clear aims which are specific in intention. Co-operation with other agencies can founder where aims are not clear and there is no starting-point from which to negotiate. For instance, the occupational therapist, the management, the tutor and adults with disabilities were all equal parties with the project worker in setting up pilot 10 (Microwave Cookery). The English as a Second Language worker, Adult Basic Education Co-ordinator and outreach researcher were similarly involved in pilot 24 (Dressmaking). Where the aims were not properly explored, the class did not establish itself, as in the case of pilot 11 (Asian Studies) (though location and timing were also factors in this case).

157. Aims and policies need to be discussed throughout an organisation and the co-operation of everyone down the line enlisted. The separation of policy from practice within a staff team can lead to failure to produce the best performance and delivery all round.

158. In one case the matter of a worker's priorities and use of time regarding outreach and supervision were never adequately discussed or overall policy on these matters explained and this led to misunderstandings which resulted in the loss of that worker. General exhortations to develop the curriculum or 'push the boat out' may well produce this outcome, if actual policies are not understood at every level.

159. The value of good work carried out without policies to validate it is likely to be dissipated, thus causing a waste of resources and goodwill.

Market research

160. We need to know what provision exists and for whom, where and when, so that the best practice can be identified and gaps filled. The value of the initial survey of providers, for example, proved its worth in this respect by identifying where provision was lacking or providers' skills and information found wanting. Brandwood Open Week similarly pointed up the needs which we were not meeting at that time – regular information and advice, linked skills opportunities etc.

161. We need to examine current mainstream provision to discover the extent and nature of adult unemployed participation in it. That points us to gaps in curriculum and groups of people who are not yet involved.

162. We need a clear idea of unemployed adults' perception of learning and its value in their lifestyles and motivations. That enables providers to target and market appropriately.

163. We need to look hard at our current resources and challenge our priorities in deploying them.

164. Market research is an important priority. It can confirm hunches or counter assumptions wrongly held. Too often, in practice, judgements are based on the subjective impressions of providers without adequate reference to potential students.

Planning

165. The broadest possible involvement of staff in planning goes a long way to ensuring commitment to the enterprise; being included and listened to motivates and encourages enthusiasm in staff at all levels. Planning needs analysis was one way of engaging unemployed adults' skills and interests, as demonstrated in the street poll. This approach allows workers from a number of backgrounds and disciplines to understand each other's different perceptions and expectations.

166. For instance, a group of volunteers drawn from church congregations may not necessarily share the aims of a tutor or welfare benefits expert. Community centre staff more used to youth and pre-school activities may need to understand the different expectations of women working with women. This was especially noticeable when staff from education and health services were involved in pilot 10 (Microwave Cookery). The students' potential was not the main concern of the latter workers and they were consequently staggered by the progress made. The tutor wrote in her report:

'The nursing staff have commented consistently on the change in the patients: that they are more confident and friendly, more interested in others and the outside world.'

167. Planning can be used as the first stage of monitoring and evaluation and also part of a total staff development exercise. Opportunities are lost by the exclusion of face-to-face practitioners from this process.

168. It is important to create regular opportunities for practitioners to influence policy and vice versa if a polarisation of interest is to be avoided. Time, although a valuable and scarce resource, needs to be committed to this.

169. Planning encourages development. The effort of shared planning in launching one computer course encouraged one community centre worker to follow up with two other courses on first aid and more computer skills. Many people had been part of the planning and preparation and this was capitalised on beyond the project. The worker commented:

'Posters were produced by the Community Association Publicity Officer and hand-outs provided by the neighbourhood worker. These were distributed to local groups by association members. The Community Development Officer organised the loan of equipment and the tutor helped with transport ... The response to this type of informal, non-threatening learning in a social setting was extremely encouraging.'

Marketing

170. It is important not to assume that those most in need are busy seeking education and training opportunities: a realistic appreciation of the client group's likely low morale, demotivation and, possibly, resistance to school and college-type institutions is an essential starting-point to marketing. This applies both to the style and means. Attention has been drawn to the appropriate locations for marketing exercises in the street poll.

171. The question of involving the long-term unemployed in voluntary work and, thereby, bringing them out of isolation, giving them purpose and recognising their valuable contribution as citizens needs to be faced when devising marketing strategies aimed at bringing education and training to unemployed adults. The involvement of unemployed adults in every stage of the Brandwood Open Week (Appendix II) proved to be a significant means of overcoming poor self-image and low confidence, as well as an opportunity to gain skills. The 24 interviews demonstrate that this type of involvement may well touch residual motivation. The leader of pilot 20, the residential training for young unemployed men, bears this out:

'I believe that getting small successes like this give the young people more confidence in themselves. It may not seem a big thing to organise a cooking rota, or sports and recreation activities for people, but on the dole you need every confidence booster you can get, every small success boosts the ego a little.'

172. The use of media which go into the home is vital if the more isolated are to be reached. For those who get about more, placing publicity in Jobcentres, benefit offices, pubs, transport, and supermarkets is effective because that is where they go and where they can see it.

173. Locally available information and meeting places will do much to attract those who may only be slightly curious in the first instance.

174. In marketing provision we need more often to project a positive image of something which appears enjoyable with a wide general appeal rather than be seen just to assume a deficiency in the consumer which education can correct.

Resources

175. The use of external funding can lead to useful curriculum development and encourage experimentation which may not otherwise be undertaken. It is important to plan ahead before such funding is taken up and to be clear about what is to be done about the outcomes and lessons learned. Clients' expectations are raised by developments and can be disappointed if the project just ends. Lack of forward planning about how to take on the positive outcomes can waste good development work and discourage students.

176. It is clear that pockets of an outer-city area can be in dire need but lack the resources which are available to inner-city areas.

177. Curriculum development in work with the unemployed need not be excessively demanding on resources. Much can be done by reordering priorities, changing direction, giving a focus, formulating appropriate policies and maximising resources already available. For instance, being clear from the start about where resources could be expected to come from removes uncertainty and encourages openness and honesty. Good communication over mundane matters can smooth the way as much as clear policies and good publicity. For instance, being able to rely on the allotted room being ready matters, just as much as knowing that the budget is safe.

Staffing

178. The careful recruitment and selection of staff for developmental work with disadvantaged groups is important. Not everyone can appreciate the nature of students' lives and expectations or can work sensitively with them.

179. It is vital that work with the unemployed is seen as an integral part of the work of the institution and that all staff understand this.

180. Clear institutional objectives which are reviewed, taking account of staff's views, are an aid to developing interest in this constantly growing and changing work. This is essential in getting the provision right and in keeping it right.

181. Support to staff engaged in this work is crucial. Working with disadvantaged groups can leave people somewhat isolated and, if they are not supported and encouraged, they can feel undervalued and anxious. The work needs to be accorded a proper status.

Delivery

182. The evidence of take-up of locally delivered educational opportunities by unemployed adults and other disadvantaged groups leads us to conclude that this balanced programme of provision of learning of all kinds, broadly targeted and locally delivered, is attractive to our client groups. It both makes an important activity for them in its own right and offers a strategic stage along the educational and training road.

183. Local access is important although perception of need and priority is more so. People were found to prefer local rather than distant amenities but would travel where opportunities were seen to be important.

184. Features of delivery style which have proved attractive to first-time adult learning students are: day-time delivery; a socially attractive setting; pay-as-you-go; introductory or beginners' courses; and informality.

185. Perhaps because adult unemployment is a recent feature of life in the West Midlands, there is an unhelpful dearth of opportunity for students to understand the context of unemployment and see for themselves the possibilities of ameliorating their situation. This has been evident in the many comments made by tutors and others about their students' need to talk through these matters, whatever course they are on.

186. The organiser of the New Directions pilot (19) commented on the value to participants of the opportunity to 'talk and listen'. Similarly, when the evaluation of pilots 6 and 7, Word Processing, took place, students welcomed this as an opportunity to share quite personal observations:

'My daughter is really bright. I am the dense one of the family, but now I feel I've achieved something.'

'My husband laughed when I said I wanted to attend the course because I had not been to night-school before.' (She explained that, by coming, she had realised that she could leave her handicapped child in someone else's care and do something for herself.)

187. Another student's comments (also on the Word Processing course) show the value of persisting in efforts to serve the needs of adults whose first chances were unsuccessful:

'I just played truant at school. It was a waste of time. In later life I realised I wanted some education and I did an 'O' level. I think education is wasted on teenagers. They cannot see how it is going to be relevant to them. There should be a way of having education when you want to learn.'

188. There is a need to avoid the twin extremes of *ad hoc*, unplanned provision on the one hand and expediency for non-educational reasons on the other.

189. An appreciation of the constraints operating in other workers' organisations was helpful in ensuring the most positive attitude to a scheme. This was so particularly, for instance, where part-time workers were concerned or where materials for a task were not already available and were needed by a tutor – books, disks, ingredients, etc.

190. Proper arrangements need to be made in detail, with due sensitivity to the lack of resources which may exist for many groups. For example, it is important to discuss the matter of room rental, caretaking arrangements, use of phone and availability of transport as well as more obvious equipment and staffing requirements.

191. It is important to recognise that responsive modes of delivery which reach out to the most needy may require adjustments to conventional systems – of administration and budgeting etc. For instance, the availability of small amounts of hard cash for immediate needs can ease the delivery quite spectacularly. Similarly, initiating provision and doing so in co-operation with others often involves contacting and networking extensively. This requires correspondence, telephone, travel etc., for which all too frequently the part-time worker pays.

Monitoring and evaluation

192. It was made clear to all staff at the outset of each pilot that the scheme would be monitored and that there would be an evaluation at the end which involved them. It was found that co-operation was forthcoming. The views of students were also welcomed. It is our view that co-operative planning and openness about the aims of the project were significant in achieving this. The participatory approach obviated any feeling of unfair judgement.

193. Data for evaluation was recorded by tutor/activity leader and researcher jointly, with centre head co-ordinator involved where appropriate. The absence of a line-management presence was one factor which was deemed to have ensured maximum openness, by removing the possibility of personal appraisal taking place at the same time.
It was also found that the routine 'to-be-expected' approach removed possible feelings of being singled out for unspecified reasons.

194. Far from resisting any evaluation, it could be said that in a number of cases workers were willing and interested enough to write down their impressions of the class and give the students every opportunity to be involved in review as the course proceeded. The tutors' own willingness to learn from students was a key factor in getting the model right. The more systems that were being tested, the more the willingness to listen and learn was important.

195. One worker was well aware of her own progress; she wrote:

'The course was a pilot scheme and something completely untried before both for the students and myself. Never having taught severely handicapped people before meant learning by trial and error ... Working (on this project) has broadened my own outlook and encouraged me to train further in this field ... The patients have given me much more than I have given them. They have allowed me to find inner strengths and confidence to do things I never before thought possible.'

196. The broadest possible evaluation is needed if we are to be in a position to learn how best to enable people's feelings of confidence and self-worth to increase. Limiting our assessment too strictly to a core of functional skills without paying attention to the students' knowledge of themselves, their worth and potential could mean a host of opportunities missed.

197. One tutor wrote:

'The entry behaviour of the students was withdrawn, sullen, uncooperative, uncommunicative ... Fear to speak, to participate, to look foolish, fear of failure were all glaringly obvious...'

Staff development

198. Clarity about the overall aim ensured the best possible curriculum development for unemployed adults using staff development as one essential means.

199. It was found that endorsement of the staff development process by senior officers' attendance at meetings helped validate the exercise. This was observed and welcomed frequently. No fewer than six such officers were involved intermittently or continously throughout and their implicit support was a great encouragement to other participants.

200. A major contribution of the project was to make a start in bringing together numbers of people with a common interest and need. Beyond that initiative, the group itself devised the programme and planning, providing both the ideas and substance of several meetings. It was found that meeting, in itself, was beneficial where separation of mutually interested parties had been the practice previously.

201. It was found that the answer to the problem of bringing together staff from a variety of institutions and backgrounds was to keep to a programme planned well in advance, usually at the same time and in the same place, with occasional changes by request, and to state, and keep to, a finishing time for the 1½-hour meetings. The extent of commitment required was clear and therefore easier to summon.

202. Interest in the group could be sustained by consistent, participatory and unobtrusive planning and follow-up. Modest part-time staffing and office resources were crucial to this.

203. Unresolved issues concerning availability of staff for such developments can raise problems about timing and location of meetings. This applied right across the board: colleges may have very limited arrangements for releasing staff in the day, whereas in adult education, community education and the voluntary sector staff may be expected to work regularly in the evenings or to be part-time or even unpaid, making it difficult to exhort them to give additional time.

204. An informal and highly participatory style of meeting ensured that the 'roll-on, roll-off' attendance was less of a problem. This was due not just to the opportunities offered for sharing information and good practice and for supportive contact with colleagues, but also in the balance established between informality and a businesslike approach to the substance of the meetings. By this means, staff could see that they had gained some knowledge and helped widen or confirm their network of contacts.

OUTCOMES

205. It is possible to identify a number of outcomes which continue beyond the term of the project:

- ☐ Links have been established, through the Staff Training and Development Group, between staff of the Area, the College, the voluntary sector and other agencies working in the field of education and training and employment – for example, the Jobcentre and library.
- ☐ As a result of their involvement in the project's work, including polls, surveys, pilot schemes etc., a number of staff and volunteers have gained experience of developing the curriculum and, as this work has increased, they have been able to build on what they have learned.
- ☐ Following the outreach and curriculum development work of the project among the Asian communities, it has been possible to continue an ESL 'Linked skills' class and continue funding an Asian worker to develop this.
- ☐ Responsibility for the work of the Staff Training and Development Group is to be taken up jointly by the Area and College, both of whom recognise the value of this kind of cross-service venture.
- ☐ With the support and guidance of the project, a weekly morning session of information and advice has been set up and continues to run in the Lecture Hall of Hall Green Library. This is a joint venture with the Library making the room and resources available and support staff provided by the Area via its Basic Education budget.
- ☐ The College is to enable the Staff Training and Development group to set up a database on the College's Word Processor which will store up-to-date information on people and resources pertaining to work with the adult unemployed.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

206. The following recommendations are addressed to those with responsibilities for providing adult education and training, in their capacity as policy-makers, managers, co-ordinators, tutors or volunteers. Few of the recommendations apply to one group only since responsibilities more often than not range over several functions. The headings follow those used in Chapter 5, 'Findings'.

AIMS AND POLICIES

[i] *That good practice be recognised, by being absorbed into policy.*

[ii] *That the experience and expertise of staff who carry out new developments and strategies be noted and used in decision-making processes.*

[iii] *That workers and decision-makers take every opportunity to clarify and share their aims.*

MARKET RESEARCH

[i] *That information about adult education provision in local authorities be collated by local authorities and kept up-to-date and available to potential students and to providers.*

[ii] *That the means are found to identify pockets of need on the one hand and successful provision on the other, so that responsive developments may take place without unnecessary delay.*

NB. We need a constant monitoring service and a consultative structure both in committees and in curriculum delivery, which includes the views of the adults in our communities.

PLANNING

[i] *That priorities for use of resources in any providing agency be the subject of regular review in the light of the best available information about need.*

[ii] *That planning and the setting of priorities involve staff at every level.*

[iii] *That plans are checked against aims and policies and progress is reviewed routinely and openly by participating colleagues.*

MARKETING

[i] *That contact with unemployed adults be established and maintained in order to ensure an understanding of their aspirations and motivation.*

[ii] *That consistent use of popular media be made possible by more flexible funding for publicity and that information be made available in places visited regularly by those with low incomes.*

[iii] *That better use be made of schools, adult centres and other places where adults learn, to market education and training opportunities and to offer information and advice.*

RESOURCES

[i] *That when external funding is taken up it is done in a way that fits an overall budgetary plan and with due consideration of the implications beyond the funding period.*

[ii] *That budgetary and other resources are deployed in a way which takes account of pockets of deprivation in outer-city areas.*

[iii] *That budgets from whatever source be decided and allocated in good time to enable proper forward planning.*

[iv] *That resource databases be established and broadcast to achieve the best use of scarce resources.*

[v] *That modest sums of money be made available to community groups for developing opportunities for education and training locally, according to need.*

STAFFING

[i] *That staff appointed to carry out new developments, especially where externally funded, are clearly involved in the main institution's planning and communications networks.*

[ii] *That the importance of security and status for staff working with disadvantaged groups be recognised in their contracts.*

[iii] *That time for review and appraisal be allowed within workers' contracts and appropriate support and training opportunities offered.*

DELIVERY

[i] *That centres known to be used by unemployed adults provide an information and guidance service on matters related to education, training and employment.*

[ii] *That daytime, locally available provision be given priority in areas and neighbourhoods of high unemployment.*

[iii] *That the need for unemployed adults to reflect on past successes and future possibilities in education be addressed by providers of education and training.*

[iv] *That provision is delivered with all necessary ancillary measures as part of the packages: clear and simple admittance procedures; suitable areas of informal meeting; personal welcome and obvious signposting; crèche facilities; timing to fit DHSS regulations and reduced bus fare periods etc.*

[v] *That the value of education for adults which is not targeted at minority groups is recognised by securing the broad range of provision which is already well used by disadvantaged groups alongside the majority.*

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

[i] *That monitoring and evaluation be built into the curriculum development process from the planning stage and seen as a positive function of the best practice and one for which time is allowed.*

[ii] *That the execution of monitoring and evaluation is fully participatory – i.e. involves tutors and students.*

[iii] *That the outcomes of evaluation are communicated routinely to decision-makers for their response.*

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

[i] *That every means of communication be employed to keep staff informed of policy, planning, developments, resources and professional development opportunities.*

[ii] *That the considerable pool of skills acquired by those working in developmental fields be identified and put to good use both in the field and in staff training.*

[iii] *That more opportunities be made to involve staff from further education, adult education, community education, the voluntary sector and other agencies together in developing themselves and the curriculum.*

[iv] *That the matter of release of staff in college and reimbursement of expenses to part-timers elsewhere be addressed as a priority, so as to make the above recommendations feasible.*

[v] *That the skills of listening be developed by all who have responsibilities for the education and training of adults in disadvantaged groups.*

[vi] *That greater use be made of job-shadowing and networking as a means of developing the curriculum through staff development.*

APPENDICES

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Chairman Allan Ainsworth

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PROJECT INFORMATION BULLETIN

TITLE: Kings Heath Adult Education and Training Development Project (RP266/REPLAN)

STARTING DATE: November 1984

COMPLETION DATE: November 1986

AIMS:

[i] To develop the education and training curriculum to meet the needs of unemployed and other disadvantaged groups of adults in the Kings Heath area of Birmingham by:

(a) identifying the educational and training needs of unemployed and other disadvantaged groups in the area;

(b) analysing existing provision in the Institute in order to identify gaps and good practice;

(c) devising schemes, in liaison with other agencies, which develop new curricula, delivery systems, guidance and outreach strategies.

[ii] To link the curriculum provision and guidance services within the education service to broader provision by other institutions (MSC, voluntary/community agencies etc.).

[iii] To monitor and evaluate the development process as a basis for further development (including staff development) within the Institute's area and in other parts of the city.

BACKGROUND:

The Kings Heath Institute area in South Birmingham has a population of 90,000 and incorporates large municipal estates and residential housing areas with unemployment rates varying between 14.6% and 24.8%. There has been a sharp decline in employment in the heavy metal industry although some clerical/adminstrative and light manufacturing employment remains.

The Institute provides an integrated adult education/youth and community service which has a network of contacts linking a variety of voluntary and statutory agencies. A number of schemes to help unemployed adults have been launched, including a pilot scheme of educational needs at the local Jobcentre and some vocational course provision, as well as a range of community-based schemes, but the different initiatives need co-ordination and evaluation if they are to represent a balanced network of learning opportunities coupled with guidance for the learners and appropriate training for staff involved.

METHOD:

[i] The project researcher will undertake a review of existing opportunities for unemployed adults in the Kings Heath area to include:

(a) Institute-based educational provision (including Adult Basic Education);

(b) vocational courses (part-time) at Hall Green Technical College;

(c) community-based initiatives;

(d) special projects, e.g. MSC Community Programme;

[ii] Experimental projects will be established to:

(a) development innovative education / training curricula in liaison with a variety of agencies;

(b) develop delivery systems appropriate to the needs of unemployed adults;

(c) provide a guidance/counselling service to assist people in the assessment of their education/training needs;

(d) devise pathways of progression between providing agencies in order to offer a network of learning work opportunities.

[iii] The project will be monitored and formatively evaluated, results presented termly to the Project Steering Committee whose membership will be drawn from local education/training providers, community groups and elected members.

OUTCOMES:

[i] A programme of linked learning opportunities coupled with guidance and counselling support for unemployed adult learners.

[ii] A programme of staff training for workers from the agencies involved in developing provision.

[iii] A report suitable for consideration for publication by FEU which can be used as a basis for development in other parts of the city. (This report, together with that of RP253, Handsworth Technical College: 'Guidance Centre for the Unemployed', will provide a blueprint for the development of Birmingham's adult training advice and adult education services. The models devised can be used for closer collaborative approaches to adult education and training between the FE and adult education sectors generally.)

CASE-STUDY:
BRANDWOOD OPEN WEEK
A Market Research Pilot Scheme

INTRODUCTION

The week of activities for unemployed adults was an exercise in developing provision for unemployed people in the Kings Heath area. The Project Researcher had been encouraged by the former Principal of Kings Heath Institute to draw together three other workers in a collaborative effort, the main aim of which was to put the spare capacity of a local school to some use on behalf of unemployed adults, ensuring the involvement of Kings Heath Unemployed Project in particular.

AIMS OF THE BRANDWOOD OPEN WEEK

The aims of Brandwood Open Week as a FACET project activity were:

[1] To offer a range of opportunities for one week to unemployed adults, particularly those not normally reached through the Adult Education Service.

[2] To capitalise on the availability of a school building in an area with few facilities.

[3] To prepare and implement plans in collaboration with other agencies.

[4] To ascertain the kind of publicity likely to attract a response to this work, without specific recruiting.

[5] To test the appropriateness of a programme of provision derived from information given by unemployed people and those working with them.

[6] To call upon a wide number of agencies for support and co-operation.

[7] To make such provision accessible in terms of timing, environment, costs to participants, crèche provision etc.

[8] To test the effectiveness and flexibility of the administrative infrastructure as part of the delivery system affecting staffing, finance and other resources.

[9] To carry out an evaluation, collaboratively and involving participants, with a view to improving and developing the proposed model.

PREPARATION

Careful preparation for the Open Week included:

(a) contact with others with relevant experience;

(b) access to written sources including polls and interviews.

The picture that emerged was of a patchy service with no clear policy or long-term strategy. Weaknesses included poor opportunities for progression, a lack of information and advice and few opportunities for joint consultation among staff or students.

A series of planning meetings established a programme as follows:

Computer skills
Basic education (form filling, applications etc.)
Recreation (volleyball, 5-a-side, badminton etc.)
Cooking on a budget
Videos
Budgeting
Advice from:
- *Employment and Training Advisory Service*
- *Adult Learners Enquiry Centre*
- *Manpower Service Commission*
- *Co-operative Development Association*

Welfare rights by computer
Refreshments
Crèche

Wide and varied publicity was given to the week and a variety of means and resources were used to recruit helpers. Responsiveness, enterprise and resilience were vital factors as needs were volatile and resources scarce. A large number of staff, both paid and voluntary, were recruited.

THE WEEK ITSELF

The target group consisted of those unemployed people not in touch with our service or those with some contact for whom this represented a development and extension of their involvement.

Of the 60 who came, a majority were male. The youngest was 18 (male), the oldest 71 (male). The age groupings were evenly spread with a slight majority at the lower end. The publicity and content of what we offered had attracted a genuinely interested or committed people.

Each one had heard about it on radio or seen a leaflet and come along. They had been *motivated*.

Approximately 42 attenders were from the immediate area. One came from outside the city, one from outside the county.

There is no doubt that hard information and advice was of interest to almost everybody, particularly that available from:

Employment and Training Advisory Service
Manpower Services Commission
Co-operative Development Association (self-employment)

Similarly, benefits advice was sought. Actual classes were also popular, with computers and cookery especially so.

The coffee bar and video played a valuable role as opportunities for informal mixing and made it easy to be present without making formal commitment. They also provided the team with opportunities to talk and break the ice.

FINANCE AND OTHER RESOURCES

Payments to staff on contract

The decision over the appropriate rate of pay for what was, in most cases, a range of jobs to be carried out by a given individual needed careful consideration. Fairness is not easy to establish in a new area of work which does not fall neatly into a system devised for another era.

Payments to other staff

It would have been impossible to enlist and encourage the involvement of low paid and unemployed help had we not had a trust fund on which to call. (We say nothing here of the desirability of carrying out basic educational work grant-aided by private sponsorship.)

A possible alternative to this lies in the system once used by holiday play schemes, whereby the local authority puts into a local bank account the balance between the grant made and the sum required to cover staff contracts. This balance could then be used for expenses and purchases on a petty cash basis.

Resources other than staff

In this respect the advantages of collaboration and co-operation were clearly seen. The premises, furniture (basic though it was), kitchen utensils, cookery tools, crèche toys, teaching materials, TV and video and sports equipment were all borrowed from either school, play-group, Recreation and Community Services or Adult Education Department.

The matter of arranging all this was, again, very time-consuming in the preparatory stages and relied heavily on people's goodwill for removal, storage etc. The TV and video even had to be taken away each evening for security reasons. The only transport available to us throughout the week was the car of the Project Worker. Again, this underlines the inadvisability of trying to work in a location which is not available on a regular basis, at least as far as storage and basic facilities are concerned. The same is true of the use of telephones; these were some distance away.

Finally, it must be stressed that it is quite impracticable to regard work of this kind as being the responsibility of local community groups alone, as it is all too clear that deprived neighbourhoods (such as the ones around the secondary school) do not have the means of generating funds to any extent. Some positive discrimination in their favour would have to be made by the Local Authority for such provision to be available regularly.

EVALUATION

Positive messages arising from the evaluation for those contemplating such outreach sampling activity are:

(a) allow adequate time for preparation, it will need more than you think;
(b) make the offer clear, don't set up unreasonable expectations;
(c) information and advice are key services and should be a higher priority than teaching;
(d) needs arising from the experience are very varied. Staff will not always be competent to deal with them so referral strategies should be planned;
(e) key support services were the crèche and canteen, and the capacity to refund travel costs was crucial;
(f) the most popular activity was computing;
(g) activities/services needing further development are:
  (i) social opportunities
  (ii) special services for women
  (iii) help with job search, counselling, benefits.

THE PILOT SCHEMES

WHAT	FOR WHOM	WHEN	WHERE	WHICH WATTS & KNASEL OBJECTIVES COULD BE MET: 1 EMPLOYABILITY	2 COPING	3 CONTEXT	4 LEISURE	5 OPPORTUNITY CREATION	POINTS OF NOTE	NUMBERS ATTENDING
[1] A WEEK OF VARIED ACTIVITIES: LEARNING, ADVICE, RECREATION	Unemployed of all ages	All day 15–19 July 1985	Brandwood Secondary School (closed) Centre of Institute	1	2	3	4	5	*This proved to be a good way to make the curriculum accessible. The effort: take-up ratio would improve given constant availability of this provision.*	60
[2] GAINING CONFIDENCE	Women	Daytime 24 weeks	Maypole (South)		2		4		*Three single parent students. All concessionary, pay-as-you-go. Positive action taken to attract women.*	5
[3] RETURN TO LEARN	Women	Daytime 12 weeks	Maypole	1	2				*Need to link with colleges. Tutor trained in personnel work – very good with adults.*	5
[4] DO-IT-HERSELF	Women	Daytime 6 weeks	Maypole		2		4	5	*All concessionary. Students expressed need for woman tutor – good communicator. Evening class failed. All students new to AE.*	8
[5] STUDY SKILLS	All comers	Evening	Swanshurst N. Central	1	2				*(failed)*	
[6] WORD PROCESSING (1)	All comers	Evening 12 weeks	Swanshurst	1				5	*Greatly valued by the students. Tutor would recommend mixed course to include shorthand and office skills. Students would welcome a certificated course.*	12
[7] WORD PROCESSING (2)	All comers	Evening 12 weeks	Swanshurst	1				5		12
[8] WELFARE BENEFITS TRAINING	All comers	Evening	Swanshurst		2	3			*Evening course failed. Daytime went well. Tutor well organised (carried out mock tribunal).*	(2)
[9] WELFARE BENEFITS TRAINING	All comers	Daytime	Colmore Centre Central		2	3			*Course had a ripple effect. Tutor attended advice sessions as a follow-up. Need for informal monies – reference books.*	9
[10] MICROWAVE COOKERY	Severely disabled	Daytime	Hospital Unit N. Central		2		4		*Excellent collaboration in hospital. Multiple benefits to students: counters institutionalisation; increases motivation etc. socialises; imparts skill; widens horizons; improves speech etc.*	4
[11] ASIAN STUDIES	All comers	Evening	Swanshurst	(Cross cultural understanding)					*Informal. Felt to be wrong time and place.*	4
[12] SUPPORT TO CHURCHES INITIATIVE	All comers at drop-in	Daytime 20 weeks	High Street Church Hall	1	2		4		*A slow but sure development. Sufficient volunteers, expressing need for guidance, hence (9) and (21). Closely defined views of needs of unemployed.*	
[13] COOKERY AND HOUSECRAFTS	All comers at drop-in	Daytime Occasional	High Street Church Hall		2		4		*Well received. Tutor a very good communicator – good participation.*	10
[14] PHOTOGRAPHY	Drop-in members and others	Daytime 12 weeks	Tenants Hall Central				4		*Activity chosen by drop-in members. Led to some video work. Students resisted leaving the estate to use dark room.*	15
[15] KNOW YOUR CITY	Drop-in members and others	6 weeks	Tenants Hall Central		2		4		*Bus passes provided and projects set for unemployed young men – very nervous of venturing away.*	12
				+ citizenship						

WHAT	FOR WHOM	WHEN	WHERE	EMPLOYABILITY 1	COPING 2	CONTEXT 3	LEISURE 4	OPPORTUNITY CREATION 5	POINTS OF NOTE	NUMBERS ATTENDING
[16] COMPUTER SKILLS	All comers	Daytime 10 weeks	Bells Farm Community Centre. South	1			4		*Absolute beginners. Followed in-depth interviews and typing. Widened horizons improved self-esteem, stimulated curiosity*	13
[17] COMPUTER SKILLS	All comers	Male 6 weeks	Billesley Community Centre	1			4			8
[18] COMPUTER SKILLS	All comers	Female 6 weeks	Billesley Community Centre	1			4			11
[19] NEW DIRECTIONS IN YOUR WORK LIFE	All comers	Daytime	Billesley Community Centre	1		3		5	*Sessions on job chances and small business opportunities more successful than 2nd chance and co-operatives*	32 overall
[20] LEADERSHIP TRAINING RESIDENTIAL	Unemployed young males	1 week	In Wales				4		*Proved to be a great confidence booster unemployed coped with all youth activities and cookery etc. four responded very well indeed*	7+ youths
				+ citizenship and leadership						
[21] VOLUNTEER TRAINING RESIDENTIAL	Volunteer from churches drop-in group	1 weekend	Fircroft College				4		*Taken as an opportunity to reconsider aims and objectives of drop-in and devise strategies for next year*	9
				+ community skills						
[22] SELF-DEFENCE AND CONFIDENCE BUILDING	Women	Daytime 10 weeks	Warstock Centre Central		2		4		*The course was requested by women using Centre. First adult contact with learning*	12
[23] ASIAN OUTREACH	Mainly for women	Over a period of a month	Kings Heath Central	The purpose was to offer educational opportunities and, to this end, carry out a survey of expressed needs.					*A time-consuming exercise though necessary since not done in recent past. Difficult because no daytime premises near to residences of students*	185 door knocks, 23 take-ups of educational opportunities
[24] ESL/DRESSMAKING	Women	Daytime 25 weeks	Colmore Central	1	2			5	*Excellent tutor and support with language from outreach worker (Asian). Two students referred to colleges.*	6
[25] STAFF TRAINING DEVELOPMENT	Staff from FE, AE, community education and voluntary sector	Teatime (and, later, lunchtime) meetings (6 per year) and planning meetings	Held at Hall Green Technical College (and, later, Highfield Hall)	Purpose to share information and good practice, acquire skills and develop professionally.					*Problems in finding suitable time to meet because different work timetables. Need for value of the group to be recognised by employers et al*	31
[26] HEALTHY LIVING	Women	1 day	Maypole				4		*Eight out of nine concessionary costs were almost covered, but risk money from project was vital*	9
				The day aimed to publicise and give a taste of learning opportunities in the neighbourhood.						
[27] INFORMATION AND ADVICE SESSIONS	All comers	Daytime	Hall Green Library	1				5	*Only achieved at the 11th hour, due to delays through separate departments with differing policies*	Not known at time of writing
				+ straight information and referral on to helping agencies.						

WHICH WATTS & KNASEL OBJECTIVES COULD BE MET

PRACTITIONERS' CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT CHECKLIST

This checklist has evolved from the experience of the project using as guides similar lists in *Adult Unemployment and the Curriculum: A Manual for Practitioners* (FEU, 1985) and *Curriculum Development in the Education of Adults: A Manual for Practitioners* (FEU, 1984).

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

(i) Has sufficient account been taken of the views and perceptions of unemployed people and experienced field workers in formulating policies and strategies?

(ii) Do practitioners have up-to-date and full information about policies and strategies relating to this?

(iii) Is there clear priority given to curriculum development for unemployed adults by the employing agency/institution/department?

(iv) Has account been taken of the known and possible policy constraints to development, e.g. workload expectations, external funder's criteria, DHSS regulations, etc?

DESIGN

(i) Have practitioners been given funds appropriate for the aims and objectives established and explored possibilities of reordering existing budgets? If there is a staff team, is each member clear about the overall budgetary potential and constraints? Do practitioners influence the budget?

(ii) Has the value of collaboration with other bodies – voluntary or statutory – been considered?

(iii) On what basis is the substance and design of the development decided. Who decides? How will 'success' be measured?

(iv) Is there the means locally of knowing (a) whether the development relates to others in the area, as a follow-up, precursor or contingent development, and (b) if there is experience, even models, to be learned from?

(v) Has the need for the development been established? How? (Were unemployed adults considered? Does any current provision cover this need?)

(vi) Is the planned location and timing relevant to the target group?

(vii) Will the provision be accessible e.g. in terms of cost/method of payment, ancillary provision – crèches etc?

(viii) Has publicity been given appropriate thought – style, type, timing, 'labelling' of the development?

IMPLEMENTATION

(i) Do the workers/tutors understand the value and necessity of making the programme's purpose and design clear to the students/participants? Have the latter been encouraged to give feedback and suggest modifications to the curriculum?

(ii) Does negotiation take place in an atmosphere of mutual respect and form part of the learning process?

(iii) Have the practitioners ensured that appropriate information, guidance and counselling can be available to participants when necessary, and that this may require additional person(s) attending? (NB. The practitioner needs a proper sense of where his/her own skills end.)

(iv) Are the administrative arrangements sensitive to the likely economic circumstances of the participants? For example – do *all* staff, including volunteers, building supervisors, ancillaries, appreciate the need for 'welcome'?

(v) Are the development workers secure in knowing that professional support to themselves is available?

(vi) Is there a network of support to students/participants?

(vii) If accommodation is separate from a main site, are communications and transport reasonably convenient?

(viii) Is there a flexible petty cash system for immediate day-to-day needs?

(ix) Has thought been given to the next steps for students? participants? Would a self-support group be sustainable? Have other agencies' staff been introduced to the group?

EVALUATION AND ADAPTATION

(i) Has time been given continuously and finally to the students'/participants' views and judgement of the provision? Has this been done specifically as well as casually?

(ii) What form(s) has the evaluation taken? Does it refer clearly to original objectives? What modifications are indicated for future planning?

(iii) Have all the colleagues with contingent responsibilities taken note of the feedback and evaluation?

(iv) Have they, i.e. the students, made progress and felt they have made progress? Can they put a value on this? (NB. Very important process in confidence building.)

(v) Could a kind of certification be devised, if appropriate?

(vi) Where were staff skills/knowledge/attitudes found to be wanting? Has opportunity been made to explore this and refer any needs discovered on to the proper quarters?

(vii) Have the progress and outcomes of this curriculum development been shared with colleagues?

(viii) Will the development be progressed through integration with mainstream funding?

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OBJECTIVES

The objectives for which **The Further Education Unit (FEU)** is established are to promote, encourage and develop the efficient provision of further education in the United Kingdom and for that purpose:

a) to review and evaluate the range of existing further education curricula and programmes and to identify overlap, duplication, deficiencies and inconsistencies therein;

b) to determine priorities for action to improve the provision of further education and to make recommendations as to how such improvement can be effected;

c) to carry out studies in further education and to support investigations of and experimentation in, and the development of further education curricula and to contribute to and assist in the evaluation of initiatives in further education;

d) to disseminate and publish information and to assist in the dissemination and publication of information about recommendations for and experiments and developments in further education.